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Analogies in the progress of  
nature and grace







ANALOGIES IN THE PROGRESS OF  
NATURE AND GRACE.

Ἄεὶ ποτε  
χρόνια μὲν τὰ τῶν θεῶν πως, ἐς τέλος δ' οὐκ ἀσθενῇ.—EURIP. *Ion*.

Θεὸς ἔδωκεν ἀντὶ δέλτου τὸν Κόσμον.—S. CHRYSOSTOM.

La Nature est une image de la Grace.—PASCAL.

# ANALOGIES IN THE PROGRESS OF NATURE AND GRACE.

FOUR SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CAMBRIDGE,

(BEING THE HULSEAN LECTURES FOR 1867).

TO WHICH ARE ADDED TWO SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE  
BRITISH ASSOCIATION IN 1866 AND 1867.

BY THE

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UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE AND LATE FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE.

CAMBRIDGE:  
DEIGHTON, BELL, AND CO.  
LONDON: BELL AND DALDY.

1868.

Cambridge :

PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A.  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.



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## P R E F A C E.

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THE Hulsean Lectures contained in the present Volume were not written so much with the view of defending Revealed Religion from objections said to be drawn from modern Science, as to shew that Revealed Religion and the Scheme of Nature, physical and social, are in correlation the one to the other, and form the continuity of one Divine plan. After reviewing the vast and unexpected results of modern investigations, they seem to me to be just so many contributions to the indirect evidences of the Christian Faith; the lines of discovery all converging to one point, and indicating that the God of Nature and He Who is revealed as God in the Old and the New Testament, are one and the same.

For instance, the deposition of the Coal-fields in ages past, practically formed one long continuous *prophecy* of the advent of an intelligent being who, in the fullness of time, was to receive the command, '*Subdue the Earth.*' Then again the curious formation of many of the marbles, and gems, and minerals, was surely the prolepsis, or the prophecy,

of a being endued with an acute apprehension of the glory and the beauty of colour and of form. Moreover, the relations of all nature, animated and inorganic, and the observable yet complicated motions of the heavenly bodies, are all correlated to the marvellous intellectual faculties of Man, who is placed in their midst, and is to render them subservient to his necessities, his convenience, or his enjoyment. I have pointed out how the very existence of such faculties is a prophecy of their immortality.

Nevertheless, from the time of Galileo to the present day, devout and well informed men, perhaps even the majority of devout men, have been troubled more or less with the apprehension, that physical enquiries are not friendly to those religious convictions which they not unreasonably hold dearer than life itself. In the following Lectures, I have not entered upon the cause or causes of these ill founded apprehensions, but I have endeavoured to shew from the very nature of the case, how groundless they are, and ever must be.

And this I have endeavoured to do, not by building up an imaginary or theoretical state of things, but by urging that we may see from the sacred records themselves, how the Divine Method actually adopted has been, to reveal to man only so much of the nature and will of God, as His creatures at the time could bear; and, even under



this limitation, to reveal such things only, as were beyond the reach of man's faculties to discover for himself. *Principles of Relativity* and of *Economy of Action*, appear to have governed the Divine procedure in the Revelations contained in the Sacred books; they are up to, and not beyond, the capacity of the recipient, and never exceed the necessities of the case. The same principles also are very observable in the teachings and miracles of Christ.

These things being so, that is to say, these principles of Relativity and Economy of Action being true principles actually carried out; moreover the Divine Revelation of the Gospel having actually superseded the Revelation of the Mosaic Economy, itself equally Divine; it appears to me that both the Theologian and the Investigator of Nature, are, at the least, quite as much *detached* from the Revelation given to the Patriarchs, as they assuredly are detached from the Revelation of the Mosaic Dispensation. Viewed in this light, the Revelations of the Science of the day, afforded by the righteous use of God's natural gifts, can no more come into collision with the Science (if there be such) in the patriarchal revelations, than the Gospel can come into collision with the Mosaic Economy. In each dispensation, the old things have passed away; each was perfect in its own relativity; each had its own divine beneficent work to do; but that work is done.

There is a continuity in the relativity of these Divine revelations.

And this I think is a fair and reasonable reply to any objections which may be drawn from the presumed incompatibility of the Mosaic Cosmogony with the disclosures of modern knowledge. I think it is sufficient to remove those apprehensions on the score of religion, felt by many devout persons, and of which I have already spoken; and, what is more important still, I think the consideration of Relativity and of Economy of the Divine Action, completely *detach Theology and Science from each other*, each leaving the other free to pursue the investigations proper to itself, not only without latent fear of mutual contradiction, but with the conviction that the truths of each center in Him, and will one day be seen to center in Him, Who is the Truth itself.

If I shall have succeeded in convincing other minds as I have convinced my own, that there is no necessary bond between the Science of modern times and the Science of the Patriarchal Dispensation, then I might reasonably be excused from adding more. There are however many devout persons who will still ask, Is it true that the Revelations in the Mosaic Cosmogony are not in accordance with modern knowledge? The proper and sufficient reply, appears to me to be this: How could you expect them to be wholly accordant? The Divine

Revelations hitherto have always borne a certain relativity to the capacity of the recipient, and have never embraced knowledge within the reach of human research. But the question will be repeated, *Is there a discordance?* Speaking, I trust, in a most reverential spirit, and with that caution and humility which the case demands, I feel bound to say that no interpretation of the Mosaic Cosmogony, regarded as a description of the actual order and actual duration of the creative steps, has yet been proposed, which is at all satisfactory to those who by study and preparation of mind are most capable of forming a correct opinion<sup>1</sup>.

I think I may add, that an account which did assign the actual order and the actual duration of the successive creative steps, would not have been within the comprehension of a rude and unscientific age, and, to such an age, would have been rather the obscuration than the revelation of intelligible truths. Moreover experience has shewn that the Creator has endued his intelligent creatures with intellectual powers, certainly adequate to discover the order of the successive creative steps, and, it may be, even to approximate to their dura-

<sup>1</sup> This was most distinctly stated by Professor W. A. Miller in his recent address before the Congress of the Clergy at Wolverhampton in October, 1867. There are few philosophers whose opinions on this subject are more worthy of attention than Professor Miller's: his well-known attainments, moderation, and devoutness, command and received a respectful hearing.

tion in time. To this latter point I shall again return.

If I must proceed to further particulars, it shall be with reverence and hesitation: not because I am in the least degree undecided in my own opinion, but because I have neither the right nor the desire to speak dogmatically on so important and difficult a question. What I have written I desire to be regarded simply as a dutiful contribution to the supply of a public need:

Si quid ego adjuero, curamve levasso,  
Ecquid erit pretii.

In the first place, I may be permitted to observe, that the Sacred Record of Creation, or, as I do not hesitate to believe it to be, the Divine Revelation, is not couched in the *first person*: it is not the Divine Creator Himself who speaks: whatever else it may be, it is a narrative in which the narrator is not the agent. In the second place, I observe that we learn from the Sacred Record itself, that on many occasions it was the Divine method to communicate knowledge, not within the reach of man's natural powers, by visions and by dreams. I shall not stop to give instances, they are familiar and they are abundant.

I would ask, then, Is it not highly probable that the account of the creative work would be revealed, if revealed at all, in the same way as other super-human knowledge was revealed to Abraham, to

Jacob, to Samuel, to Ezekiel, to St John? If it was so revealed, was it not given by means of a vision or a series of visions? If so, then might we not, under the circumstances of the case, expect that the whole vision would be broken up into its several parts, and be presented *in such an order as would be most suitable to the capacity of the ancient prophet, and to the capacities of those to whom he was to narrate the heavenly vision?* In other words, Is it not conceivable that there was no original intention, on the part of the Revealer, to assign to the order of the visions, the order of the actual fact?

Again, if we conceive a series of visions on one and the same day or night, each exhibiting to the inspired prophet some one of the six creative processes, each vision commencing in gloom, then breaking forth into a visible picture, and then fading away, would not the natural, not to say the inevitable, description be ‘evening was, and morning was, one day;’ ‘evening was, and morning was, a second day;’ and so on to the end of the description? In this point of view, would not the term ‘*day*’ necessarily apply to the *apparent duration of each step in the visional series, and bear no reference whatever to the duration of the actual creative step?*

Admitting as I do, the foregoing hypothesis or interpretation, to be, to my own mind, at least an approximation to the truth of the case, then I see



therein nothing which jars or can jar, either against the revelations of Science, or against what I learn from the Sacred Scriptures, to have been the Divine procedure on other occasions when God has been pleased to communicate with man'. I see therein an instance, among ten thousand other instances, of the Great Father taking His child by the hand and, with the wisdom of love, leading him unto as much of the truth as his mind has the strength to bear. He has many things to say to His child, but the child cannot bear them now.

It is here that I stop ; for it is by no means the main intention of the Lectures and Sermons in this Volume to enter upon the discussion of such topics. But before I quit the subject, I wish it to be clearly

<sup>1</sup> Some of my readers, perhaps many of them, will be all the better satisfied with the orthodoxy of the interpretation which I have proposed, when they learn that some such an hypothesis does not jar on the mind of so devout and sensitive a Theologian as Dr Pusey. In the very able and very interesting Essay which he read to the Church Congress at Norwich in 1865, Dr Pusey writes as follows :—" Apart from details, I see no reason why the idea, familiar to the readers of Hugh Miller, that God spread before the mind of Moses pictures of His creative operation, out of time, should be less accordant with the mind of God the Holy Ghost than any other. A divine of very reverent mind has suggested to me the analogy, that the closing book of Revelations unfolds the future in a series of visions, without defining the time of the events in the future, whether contemporaneous or successive. The solemn rhythm, the picture character of the whole, would preclude one from laying down, that the past facts of creation were not exhibited to Moses in the same way as visions of a real future were opened to the later prophets, independently of time." It may be proper for me to add that the interpretation which I have proposed, in its details, differs very widely from that by Hugh Miller: it approximates more nearly to, though it is not identical with, that proposed by the Rev. E. Huxtable, in his reply to Mr Goodwin's Essay.

understood that I do not propose the foregoing interpretation as being in any great respect new: parts of it will be found scattered in various writers who have preceded me, but I have endeavoured to give, and I think I have given, a cohesion to the whole.

Regarding however the necessity or the advisability of at present offering any fresh contribution to the exegesis of this difficult portion of the Sacred Scriptures, I shall excuse myself by laying before the reader the opinions of two eminent writers, neither of whom is chargeable with deficiency in reverence, or caution, or information.

The late honoured and lamented Dr Whewell, under the heading of a Section, "*When should old Interpretations be given up?*" writes as follows<sup>1</sup>: "But the question then occurs, What is the proper season for a religious and enlightened commentator to make such a change in the current interpretation of sacred Scripture? At what period ought the established exposition of a passage to be given up, and a new mode of understanding the passage, such as is, or seems to be, required by new discoveries respecting the laws of nature, accepted in its place? It is plain, that to introduce such an alteration lightly and hastily would be a procedure fraught with inconvenience; for if the change were made in such a manner, it might be afterwards discovered

<sup>1</sup> Whewell's *History of Scientific Ideas*, Vol. II. p. 305: the whole section is worth perusal.

that it had been adopted without sufficient reason, and that it was necessary to reinstate the old exposition. And the minds of the readers of Scripture, always to a certain extent and for a time disturbed by the subversion of their long-established notions, would be distressed without any need, and might be seriously unsettled. While, on the other hand, a too protracted and obstinate resistance to the innovation, on the part of the scriptural expositors, would tend to identify, at least in the minds of many, the authority of the Scripture with the truth of the exposition ; and therefore would bring discredit upon the revealed word, when the established interpretation was finally proved to be untenable.”

Bishop Butler thus expresses his opinion<sup>1</sup>:—

“And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood ; so, if it ever comes to be understood, before the *restitution of all things*, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at ; by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing and pursuing, intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For, this is the way in which all improvements are made ; by thoughtful men tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our

<sup>1</sup> *Analogy*, Part II. ch. III.



minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible, that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena, and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended, that events, as they come to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture."

I retire behind the *Ægis* of their ample shields.

I have rigidly abstained from adding notes to the Hulsean Lectures : the range of the subjects therein introduced from Theology and from Physics, is so considerable, that notes once commenced would soon proceed to an inconvenient extent. In this place, however, I may be excused for introducing the quotation from the writings of Condorcet<sup>1</sup>, to which I have alluded in the fourth Lecture. He says:—

“Le degré de vertu auquel un homme peut atteindre un jour, est aussi inconcevable pour nous, que celui auquel la force du génie peut être portée. Qui sait par exemple, s’il n’arrivera pas un tems où nos intérêts et nos passions n’aurent sur les jugemens qui dirigent la volonté, pas plus d’influence que nous les voyons en avoir aujourd’hui sur nos opinions scientifiques ; où toute action contraire au droit d’un

<sup>1</sup> *Œuvres de Condorcet*, par Arago, Vol. VI. p. 682, Paris, 1847.

autre, sera aussi physiquement impossible, qu'une barbarie commise de sang froid l'est aujourd'hui à la plupart des hommes."

An opinion such as this, however arrived at, written be it remembered in the Reign of Terror, may convey a solace to some minds less brave than Condorcet's, when they fall into despondency at the circumstances which now surround us, as a Church or a Nation.

The Note written in 1866, on Mr Darwin's hypothesis of Natural Selection, has been somewhat modified: the reasons are both curious and instructive. That eminent Philosopher had, in the first edition of his work, expressed an opinion, *since withdrawn*, that the 'denudation of the weald' had probably required the enormous period of some 300 millions of years. This implied the existence of the earth *provided with an ocean*, for at least a million of a million years! Subsequently to the expression of this opinion, shared, it must be said, by other competent geologists, it became apparent, from certain very recondite investigations of Professor Adams, M. Delaunay, and others, that the length of the day, contrary to the previous conclusions of Laplace, was now, through tidal action, increasing at the rate possibly of from three to six seconds in a million years. This slight alteration is of course quite insensible during the limits of modern astronomical observations, but would accumulate to so very sensible an amount, during

the long periods of the earth's existence in its present form assumed by Mr Darwin, as to render that protracted existence wholly impossible. Whether this reckoning of time by the million of millions of years may be necessary for the modification and development of species by Natural Selection, is not now the question: the assumption of these inconceivable periods of time being withdrawn, the astronomical consequences are not tenable.

Since the earliest publication of Mr Darwin's (notwithstanding certain objections) most instructive work, Sir Charles Lyell has very recently entered upon the subject of the possible duration of the earth since the Laurentian formations, to the present time<sup>1</sup>. Of course the estimate is rough, and the data are not very definite, nevertheless the process appears to be philosophical, and the conclusion is not known to contradict any other results of science. This period is roughly estimated at between 200 and 300 millions of years. Sir William Thompson, from considerations of the annual amount of Solar radiation, makes the following estimate: "It seems on the whole most probable, that the Sun has not illuminated the earth for 100 millions of years, and almost certain that he has not done so for 500 millions of years. As for the future, we may say with equal certainty, that the inhabitants of the earth cannot continue to enjoy the light and heat essential to their life, for many

<sup>1</sup> Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, Vol. I. p. 301, Ed. 10.

millions of years longer, *unless sources now unknown to us are prepared in the great storehouse of Creation!*" I do not know that, practically speaking, we are much concerned with periods of duration such as these. No objection that I am aware of, can be drawn from the science of Astronomy to a duration such as that of a *hundred* millions of years. A *million* of millions of years is quite another consideration, although the shorter period as entirely evades our conceptions as the longer. It is reassuring to find the geological *Æons* reduce themselves to some reasonable compass, and it is very instructive to observe the conclusions of the naturalist on such a subject as that of the earth's age, in fair accordance with those, drawn independently, from recondite physical considerations.

Before dismissing the note on Natural Selection, I may be pardoned for expressing the satisfaction I have felt at the confirmation of my objection to Mr Darwin's reasoning, in the Duke of Argyle's *Reign of Law*. His Grace argues *generally* from the prevalent correlation of external circumstances to the various organs of animal life: my argument, on similar grounds, was confined to the particular case of the human eye. I am glad also to find myself in accord with so philosophical a mind, with regard to the evidences of *mind* in the creative work, afforded by the systematic prevalence of beauty; to this I have added the prevalence also of the joy of existence.

It is impossible for any thoughtful person, and least of all for a clergyman, not to notice the zealous attempts now making by some of the ablest minds among the laity to uphold the truth of the Christian Revelation against the attacks of the bold, insinuating, and fashionable positivism of the day. So long as highly gifted statesmen and jurists, such as the Duke of Argyle, Mr Gladstone, Vice-Chancellor Wood, and many others, thus publickly avow their religious convictions, the boast that Christianity is effete, is sufficiently confuted by facts patent to all eyes not wilfully shut.

In the note on Prayer, I have, after the example of some of the ancient Fathers, treated the second Alcibiades as the work of Plato. I am aware of the objections which have been made to its authenticity, mainly on the score of an anachronism which it contains. But I presume it was not Plato's object to represent his dramatic dialogues as actualities: and the second Alcibiades is not the only dialogue which is chargeable with an anachronism. Under any circumstances, the extreme antiquity of the production is unquestionable, and the illustration of my argument is unimpaired. Mr Grote and others consider that, by the teacher who was to inform the statesman's mind, Socrates himself is intended: if so, undoubtedly one part of my argument fails; but I greatly prefer the more ancient interpretation which I have adopted, and I am convinced that the



perception of the late Professor Whewell was not only finer, but more accurate; that accomplished philosopher says: "Socrates is, by a sort of mysterious implication, half identified with a divine teacher."

The only note which I have added in the appendix to the Nottingham Sermon, is one which possibly may interest the Theologian. In considering the continuity of Faith which pervades the Old and the New Testament, I was struck by the persistency with which the Septuagint translators render the Hebrew words equivalent to *Trust*, in the Old Testament, by the very inadequate Greek word equivalent to *Hope*. I think I have accounted for it on a principle which may have a much wider application.

With regard to the Sermon preached at Nottingham, it was written immediately after the delivery of Mr Grove's address to the British Association. Those who had the privilege of then hearing, or who have subsequently read, Mr Grove's discourse, will at once perceive that his remarks on the System of Nature suggested mine on the scheme of Divine Revelation. That eminent philosopher pointed out, with a graceful comprehensiveness peculiarly his own, how a Law of CONTINUITY pervades and embraces the whole physical universe, so far at least as our knowledge of it at present extends. There are no gaps, no sudden leaps in Nature, he observed, probably not even in the interplanetary spaces themselves. Modern

discovery seems to indicate with more or less distinctness that the sun and the larger planets are in their turns succeeded by smaller asteroids, and these again by zones of revolving meteoric or planetary dust, the position of many of these zones being at least partially determined, and the times and places when they become entangled and inflamed in our atmosphere being more or less accurately known. Saturn, again, has his systems of rings, probably consisting of meteoric matter, and the sun is surrounded by that mysterious substance from whence proceeds the zodiacal light. All these systems of matter, moreover, are either identical in composition, or at all events contain many terrestrial elements in common. Naturalists also tell us that the same sort of unbroken gradation or CONTINUITY exists in the organic world ; species melting into species, they say, so that the further our knowledge extends, the more difficult it is to decide where one ends and another begins. Nevertheless I think it must be admitted that the continuity is broken in the case of the introduction of *Man upon the earth* : there is in his case a leap into consciousness, and in this respect there is a gap between him and the lower animals.

The evidence that such is probably the constitution of the things we see, was perhaps never more clearly and succinctly detailed than in the discourse to which I refer. While listening to this account

of the constitution of Nature, Origen's remark, quoted by Bishop Butler, could scarcely fail to occur to the mind of any person at all versed in theology, and it certainly occurred to mine. Butler, indeed, for the purposes of his treatise, somewhat narrows the scope of what that most philosophical of ancient divines intends to imply, for the version which he gives is this : "*He who believes the Scriptures to have proceeded from the author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in them as are found in the constitution of Nature*<sup>1</sup>." Origen's remark, however, does not appear to be restricted to the question of *difficulties* alone, but to include any and all generic relations of created things which may be discovered by human research. Had he spoken in the language of our day, he would probably have said, "There is a *Continuity* between the Scheme of Nature and the Scheme of Revelation, as recorded in the Scriptures."

In this point of view, and so far as the very restricted limits assigned to me would permit, I have endeavoured to show how the great scheme of redemption may be regarded as a grand continuation, or rather as the divine climax, of that system of intervention and vicarious suffering which not only pervades the natural world, but without which merciful alleviation, that world would become a scene of hopeless misery. Butler, as is well known, has

<sup>1</sup> *Analogy*, Introduction.



already shown the same thing, under the idea of Analogy, which I here present under the thought of gradation or continuity. I then proceed to show how faith in the Redeemer is a grand continuation also, or rather is a divine climax of that principle of trustfulness in each other, which forms the very cement of the social fabric. Lastly, I have given my reasons for representing the restoration or sanctification of man's moral character through communion with God, as in the main a sacred extension of that Imitative Principle acting through association, which it has pleased God to implant in our nature for many wise and moral purposes, and which in this case He adorns with His especial Grace.

I do not pretend that there is anything essentially new in these thoughts ; if there were, this very novelty would have been, to me at least, a sufficient reason for a very careful reconsideration. But then the *grouping*, I believe, is new, just as the grouping of certain acknowledged principles in the scheme of nature, under the term Continuity, is unquestionably new on the part of Mr Grove. I think also, that this mode of viewing the scheme of Revelation, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, is not without considerable importance. For surely it must be a matter of great interest to the Christian student, to see how each fresh accession of human knowledge which God has permitted (and as I think has intended) His creatures to make, regarding the natu-

ral world, not seldom serves also to illustrate and confirm our faith in that scheme of Divine Government which is revealed to us in the Bible. It was mainly this consideration which induced me to select this new topic of Continuity, as the proper subject for an address from the pulpit to the members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; and I have to express my gratitude for the patient and respectful hearing which they gave to my remarks.

It may not here be out of place to observe, that the word Continuity is not the only philosophical term for which we are indebted to Mr Grove. This term he has applied to the *plan* of nature throughout its known extent; but he has also proposed another word, which groups together the *forces* of nature in a singularly happy and expressive manner. These forces co-exist, interlace, osculate with each other; they are capable of evolution in a definite manner, the one from the other. The associations of matter with motion, light, heat, electricity, magnetism, and chemical action, are all (in the language of Mr Grove) CORRELATED, and within prescribed limits, are interchangeable in quality and in quantity. This CORRELATION of the physical forces may, I think, be regarded as, upon the whole, the most remarkable discovery since the discussion of the Law of Gravitation by Newton; and there are not wanting reasons to expect that even the attraction of gravita-

tion itself may be found to be a link in the same physical chain. Now, since it is thus shown that the Divine Governor of the universe has seen fit to bind, in a bond of Correlation, the forces acting in that part of His dominions which are *seen*; ought we not, in the spirit of Origen's remark, to look for a similar Correlation between those principles or laws, which have their proper functions in that part of the Divine Government, which, though *not seen*, is revealed? If we seek for it, we shall find it.

Where, for instance, do the laws of Providence end, and where do the laws of Grace begin? are not both of them phases of the same Divine loving care? Does not the one pre-suppose the other? And a similar remark holds good regarding the functions of Faith, and Hope, and Love, and Obedience. Is not Hope the twin-sister of Faith? And is not Obedience the daughter of Love<sup>1</sup>? And what becomes of Obedience when Faith is under a cloud? And in the great scheme of Man's redemption, does not an Apostle tell us that Justification and Sanctification co-exist and interlace? and may not this fact go far to explain the interminable and sometimes unloving discussions regarding their true origin and their distinctive functions?

Hence the sagacious remark made by Origen some fifteen centuries ago, like the expressions of other

<sup>1</sup> See Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*.

great comprehensive truths, proves to be prophetic, and reaches to us and embraces our children. And this leads me to observe how unnecessary and how suicidal is that timidity, not to use a stronger term, with which many religious persons, and I regret to add, some divines among us, receive the successive disclosures of the constitution of natural things, which of late years have come upon us in thick abundance. Unnecessary, because each new fact, each new truth, when fairly presented to the mind, if only it be a truth, cannot fail to become a new illustration of Him Whom they know to be The Truth, and Whom they profess to love. For my own part, and I hope I say it with no affectation, and I am sure I say it with no reserve, from the results of modern research, I have gathered additional reasons for resting in the simplicity of the ancient Christian Faith, and in modern discoveries, I have found many a new and unexpected trace of the Creator's majesty, of His power, His wisdom, and His love. Some instances of what I mean will, it is hoped, be found in the Sermon which follows these remarks. May I be permitted to say, that if the progress of knowledge shall, on a calm and impartial review, induce Theologians somewhat to modify, here and there, a popular, or hasty, or merely human interpretation of one or two portions of the Divine Revelation, I am quite sure that, with this increase of intelligent perception of the Will of God, there must

be associated the exaltation of our reverential love of His Word. At least I, for one, have found it so.

But it seems to me to be worth considering whether this suspicious timidity regarding science and scientific men, may not after all be grounded on an entire mistake. For after all, is it *true* that the pursuit of science has any inherent tendency towards religious scepticism? I would venture to ask whether Kepler, or Newton, or Leibnitz, or Euler, or Linnæus, or Cuvier, were sceptics? If it were not that obvious reasons forbid it, I could put, without misgiving, the same question in reference to the great majority in the long phalanx of living men, who are devoting God's noble gift of genius to the elucidation of God's works. I do not say that the fashionable Positivism of the day has not found some adherents among men of science, as it has found many among educated men of every class. But it is *pre-occupation of mind*, rather than science, which is, and ever has been, the prolific parent of scepticism and of indifference in religion. Are not the pre-occupations of high position, the pre-occupations of ambition, of literature, of money-getting and of money-spending, of conceit, of sensual habits, and even of idleness, at least as unfriendly to the hearty acceptance of the Christian Revelation, as are the pre-occupations of scientific pursuits? I trust I am not guilty of speaking in a presumptuous spirit, if I ven-



ture to remark that enormous mischief has arisen from ill-judged, unmerited, and often very ignorant attacks which have been made upon the supposed tendencies of science, and the supposed scepticism of scientific men, from the pulpit, in religious circles, and in religious publications. It is agreeable to no man to be pointed at with the finger of suspicion ; and men of sensitive and independent minds will leave, and within my own knowledge have left, an injudicious or ill-tempered ministration of God's Word, not from natural distaste for revealed truth, but where they have found themselves, and the at least innocent pursuits they love, made the object of covert, and unkind, and ignorant comment. It can be no exaggeration to say, that such an alienation of even one highly gifted and influential mind is nothing short of a public loss, and that, therefore, the timidity in question is practically *suicidal*.

On the other hand, it cannot be doubted, and it may not be concealed, that there is a *reticence*, and I wish I were wrong in adding there is a growing reticence, observable in the modern writings of some able men, which is both disappointing and painful to religious minds. It is a reticence regarding that Eternal Father, Who, even on principles of natural religion alone, is the Prime Cause, and the Governor of that universe, the frame-work of which is the object of the researches of these thoughtful men. It may be that one cause of this reticence is, the natural

reaction from certain violations of good taste and propriety, which at one time abounded in the (after all, well-meant) writings of second-hand writers and religious sciolists. It may be that another cause is to be found in that these great writers have in their own minds intentionally distinguished the subjective from the objective, separating the things of sight from the things of faith, and withholding the expression of their emotions, while explaining the grounds of their convictions: but whatever the causes may be, the fact remains, and as I have said, it is both disappointing and painful. I will only venture to add one observation more upon this subject, and I am sure that the great writers to whom with unfeigned respect I allude, will bear me out in the justness of the remark—and it is this; the giants of old, who were the pioneers of modern knowledge, the Keplers for instance, the Newtons, the Bernoullis, the Eulers of ancient fame, had no such reticence. Why should the sons be more reticent than the fathers? As a brilliant example of the outspoken conviction of a great mind, I cannot do better than conclude with a few passages out of that magnificent Scholium with which Newton closes the *Principia*, and if I give the original, it is because I despair of making or of finding a version which could reproduce the eloquence of Newton's words:—“*Elegantissima hæcce solis, planetarum et cometarum compages, non nisi consilio et*

*dominio entis intelligentis et potentis oriri potuit. Et si stellæ fixæ sint centra similium systematum, hæc omnia simili consilio constructa suberunt UNIVS dominio...Hic omnia regit non ut anima mundi, sed ut Universorum Dominus. Et propter dominium suum, Dominus Deus Παντοκράτωρ dici solet. Nam Deus est vox relativa, et ad servos refertur; et deitas est dominatio Dei, non in corpus proprium, uti sentiunt quibus Deus est anima mundi, sed in servos. Deus summus est ens æternum, infinitum, absolute perfectum...Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium, sed durat et adest...Ut cæcus non habet ideam colorum, sic nos ideam non habemus modorum, quibus Deus sapientissimus sentit et intelligit omnia...Corpore omni et figurâ corporeâ prorsus destituitur, ideoque videri non potest, nec audiri, nec tangi, nec sub specie rei alicujus corporeæ coli debet...Hunc cognoscimus solummodo per proprietates ejus et attributa, et per sapientissimas et optimas rerum structuræ et causas finales, et admiramur ob perfectiones; veneramur autem et colimus ob dominium. Colimus enim ut servi, et Deus sine dominio, providentiâ, et causis finalibus nihil aliud est quam fatum et natura. A cæca necessitate metaphysicâ, quæ eadem est et semper et ubique, nulla oritur rerum variatio. Tota rerum conditarum pro locis ac temporibus diversitas, ab ideis et voluntate entis necessario existentis solummodo oriri potuit...Et hæc de*



*Deo, de quo utique ex phænomenis disserere, ad philosophiam naturalem pertinet."*

In the notes, I have given what appear to me valid reasons, drawn from philosophical considerations, why I cannot accept Mr Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection, as an explanation of the development of the human Eye from some greatly inferior organization. If the arguments are correct they extend to other organs also. In the strictures on this theory, I trust not a word will be found inconsistent with that respectful admiration which I, in common with most educated men, entertain for the author of some of the most charming books in our language. I hope Dr Tyndall also will find no just cause for complaint in the manner of my taking exception to some of his recent remarks on Prayer.

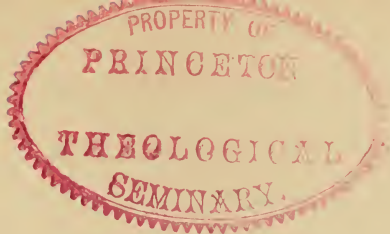
The great mental agitation on subjects connected with Religion, for which this age is remarkable, so far from furnishing a reasonable cause for despondency, may fairly be viewed as a providential opportunity for learned and high-placed divines to exhibit and enforce such new aspects of truth as they may consider to have been heretofore overlooked<sup>1</sup>. It was in this light that Augustine habitually regarded the controversies of his day. It is Anathema, and not moderation in argument, that is a sure sign

<sup>1</sup> See Dean Hook's *Oxford Sermons*, 1837, No. 3.

either of a falling or a weakly supported cause. In contending with an opponent, nothing is gained by that assumption of a tone of superiority, or by that “look of offence, which though harmless in effect, nevertheless,” in the words of the greatest of ancient historians<sup>1</sup>, “is troublesome and painful to those who endure it.”

<sup>1</sup> Thucyd. Lib. II. Cap. 37.

CAMBRIDGE, *Jan.* 31, 1868.



## LECTURE I.

### *THE SLOWNESS OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS.*

ISAIAH XI. 9; 2 PETER III. 8.

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

THROUGHOUT the long roll of many centuries, the thoughts contained in this promise of the prophet, and in this caution of the apostle, have animated the hopes, or sustained the patience, of God's true children, in all their sad variety of pain. The promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head ushered in the first dispensation of God's grace to man. Its reiteration in the last words of the Lord Jesus to His redeemed, "Behold, I come quickly," closes the Canon of the Holy Books. It was the hope that the Messiah of their covenant God should come, to restore the land and the government to Israel, which alone dried the tears of those who had sat down to weep by the

waters of Babylon, hanging their harps upon the trees that were therein. It was substantially the light of the same hope, in another and a brighter form, which alone illuminated the dreary catacombs serving at once for the tomb and the sanctuary, and, by God's providence, for the cradle of the early Church struggling in her agony. And once more, in times nearer to our own, it was the settled conviction that Christ their king would, in his own good time, come to them in royal form, claiming and avenging his own, which nerved the Waldenses to suppress their moans, and to look with undaunted eye upon their slaughtered saints,

Slain by the bloody Piedmontese who roll'd  
Mother with infant down the rocks.

By this hope then the Church of God, in all ages, has been, and is now, saved, and that not alone in her fiercer trials and rarer emergencies, but it is the unclouded confidence that Christ the king shall one day reign in righteousness and peace, which shines as the one light within the Christian's dwelling amidst bereavement or anguish or poverty or oppression or the canker of earthly hopes; or in serener times is cherished as a lamp to the Christian's feet and a lantern to his path, guiding and cheering him in the noiseless tenour of a holy life. I may add, it is the hope of this second Advent of Christ which is commemorated throughout Christendom this very day.

Meanwhile, where is the promise of His coming?

For since the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. This was the insidious taunt which assailed the faith and tried the constancy of the early Church. They could count among their members not many wise men after the flesh. For the most part they had accepted the truth as it is in Jesus, not so much through the force of argument as through the persuasion of the logic of the affections and the yearnings of spiritual need ; hence for them, the best, if not the only shield against these fiery darts of the evil one, was the sacred experience of the regenerate heart, the witness of the Divine Spirit testifying to their spirits that they were the sons of God : it was impossible to doubt that He who had said to them, "I will come to you again," was a faithful Saviour, and they could hardly forget His words, "in patience possess ye your souls."

But if this hope deferred was a sore trial to the Christians of old, how has the force of that trial become redoubled to ourselves after the lapse of 1800 years ! For the fact cannot be evaded, (and I have no desire to evade the fact) that the Lord of the Church still "delayeth His coming." It cannot be denied that the Religion of the Cross, that truest and highest 'knowledge of the Lord,' so far from 'covering the earth,' as yet extends not even in a nominal form over a fifth part of its population ; and the familiar records of every day force upon us

the unwelcome conviction that of no part of Christendom can it be said with truth, they neither 'hurt nor destroy in God's holy mountain.' To add to this severe but necessary trial of the militant Church, there is now superadded this gratuitous exaggeration of her trouble, that men who pass for the philosophers of the day would fain persuade us that the true reason of the slow progress, or as they would invidiously term it, the failure of Christianity, lies in the fact, that the religion of Christ, like other systems, has had its little day, has run its natural course, and in its turn, like other systems, has become obsolete. If this thought has any sting in it for ourselves, the smart perhaps may come from the consciousness of our own personal share in the hindrance to the progress of the Faith of Christ. But this is not all. There are those who sit in the seat of the interpreters of nature who loudly assert, not alone that all things have continued ever as they were of old, but that by the force of inevitable law all that appertains to the world of matter and to the world of intellect, and to the world of emotion,

"whatever stirs this mortal frame,"

*must* have continued, and must continue, as it was since the beginning of the creation. These bold interpreters of nature, it would be unbecoming to use a stronger term, would fain have us believe that they have extracted from their mistress her choicest secret; and the secret is, that she every-



where raises her voice in protest against miracles, and ever has been, and must ever be, inexorable to the pleadings of human prayer.

If these allegations of the opponents of Christianity were indeed true, then I need scarcely say, of all men, we Christians must be most pitiable. But what is the reply to these calumnies of our faith, drawn, as they are said to be, from this alleged monotonous uniformity, this inflexible constancy of nature? The replies, I conceive, are twofold in their bearing. To one of them I have already referred, and it is one which requires no learning, save the learning of the heart to understand or to supply. It is true that no one can fully appreciate its force who has not found, or has not desired to find, 'the secret of the Lord,' be he the learned, or be he the unlettered man. That reply was expressed in two short words by one of the ablest and most thoughtful philosophers who have lived in the respect and the affections of Englishmen in modern times. Speaking of the truth of the Christian faith as demonstrated by its formal evidences, Coleridge said with an emphasis which will sink the deeper the more it is considered: "Do not talk to me of the Evidences of Christianity;—*Try it.*" And there is many a simple man and many a gifted man among us who could say, I have tried this faith, this effete, this obsolete faith, as some would presume to call it, and I have found that it fills me with peace; peace



with the known which surrounds me, peace with the great unknown Father who is above and beyond me; it refreshes me with hope, it animates me with love, it endues me with inner strength to eschew the evil and to choose the good. "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him, until that day." This is one reply which satisfies the man's individual self.

But for us—for us who are surrounded by all the appliances of learning, and furnished with the fruitful results of ancient and modern thought; for us whose calling of God it is to go forth to the great outer world, clothed not alone in a panoply for ourselves, but who, having kindled our torch within the shrine of truth, are responsible for the sharing and the diffusion of its light to those who sitting in darkness and the shadows of doubt cry out, "Come over and help us"—what, I ask, are such as we to say to such as these? I answer, we may say at once and in general, slowness of progress is no sign of failure; on the contrary, slowness of progress in all that is enduring, is the great Law of the Universe. The creature is impatient, the Creator is deliberate. The creature, whose sum of earthly life is bounded by the threescore years and ten, hurries to and fro in the restlessness of his will; the Creator sitting in quietude upon His eternal throne upholdeth all things in the majestic leisureness of unbounded

power. With Him 'a thousand years are as one day.' I think I shall be able to convince you that it is to overlooking this law of slow and deliberate action in the Divine government of nature, that we may trace no slight part of the mental distress which harasses many thoughtful men at the present day. For this reason, I propose this continuity of the law of slowness of progress, pervading the physical, the mental, and the moral universe—I propose the analogies of this prevalent leisureness of the Divine action, so far as we are able to trace it and understand it, as the staple and the main argument of at least two of the Lectures which I am to deliver from this pulpit. It is to this that I shall shortly return.

And next, as to the undisturbed constancy, the monotonous uniformity of nature, which at every stage of its progress is said by some writers to protest against the intrusion of miracle, and to render illogical the interposition of prayer;—when I think of the scheme of nature, so far as it is comprehended by us in this 19th century, my mind at once reverts to the grand, majestic, ceaseless march of the sun with all that host of material systems which he holds together under the influence of his power. To us men, measuring as we must measure by our earthly cycles and by our tiny units of space, this stately march of the solar universe seems uniform in its rate, and definite in the point towards which it tends. But surely

this uniformity of rate and this straight definite line of progress are only apparent, and arise solely from the incalculable sweep of the cosmical curve in which this universe moves, and from mere terrestrial time, as yet too brief to observe a deflection. Wait with the patience of God, and this vast universe will have visited other regions of the infinitude of space ; new, and it may be inconceivable circumstances, will have intervened ; new combinations of other forces will have been introduced ; and the rate and the line of the stately progress will all be changed. And as it is impossible to indicate at what point of its cosmical orbit this Universe may not enter into new circumstances and be subject to new forces, thus giving rise to hitherto unknown resultants—to Miracles, if you please to assign to them that name—so it seems illogical to say that the occurrence of such results during any particular era of the world's existence is *inconceivable*. So this earth and all that is on it and surrounds it, this nature, as we call it, is after all changeful in its constancy, and various in its uniformity. Constant and uniform alone in this, that it is under the care of God, with whom alone is 'no variableness neither shadow of turning.'

And surely this steady, various march of the vast material Cosmos can hardly fail to be a type of the *moral* universe circling around the centre of infinite perfection in some marvellous orbit which

is ever approaching and approaching the throne of God, yet never nigh.

With thoughts like these possessing our minds we are now prepared for the consideration of the main subject on which I desire to engage your attention, viz. *continuity of slowness of progress as a law of created things*. I think that walking by the light of human knowledge—a knowledge which we ought never to forget has come to us through God's blessing on His own great gift of genius wherewith He has inspired favoured men, loyal to the responsibility of their calling—I say, walking by the light of science we shall find, *in the first place*, many indications of deliberate slowness of progress in the successive stages of the creation of the earth, ultimately fitting it with a marvellous and a loving foresight for the abode of Man. And, *in the second place*, after Man has appeared upon this elaborate earth, Man with all his latent vast capacity, I am sure we shall trace a similar slowness of progress in the development of his intellectual powers, and in his acquisition and storing up of human knowledge ; and surely this knowledge is a creation also—the creation of the mind.

And I would then ask, if we shall have succeeded in tracing slowness of progress as a primordial law, which the great Creator has imposed upon himself both in the material and in the intellectual parts of His creation, would you not, *in the third place*, expect to find a similar slowness of progress in

the *moral* development of man, in the restoration, in the building up his moral being into the image of God? would you not in fact *expect* to find a slowness of progress in the acceptance of Christianity in the hearts and minds of God's redeemed, if a revelation told you, as it assuredly does tell you, that the religion of Christ is the only means of perfecting their moral nature in the sight of a Holy Creator?

Or, putting this argument into another form, if we find, as we do find, this progress of the Christian faith slow, it may be even mysteriously slow, shall we not say that this is in analogy, in continuity, with those other arrangements for the progress of the material creation, and for the development of man's intellectual being, both of which we admit originate with God?

Now this is the main argument which I shall propose for your consideration: no doubt it will have a few ramifications, and I may be compelled to deduce from it a corollary or two not perhaps wholly expected from the premises on which the argument itself is founded. I think for instance it will be found to throw some light upon the interpretation which ought to be put upon certain portions of the divine revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures, not merely because the interpretation may be found rational and consistent, but because it has become necessary. And if the mode of interpretation I allude to be true, then I think it will remove from



some minds a load which has long oppressed them, as certainly it has removed it from my own.

Moreover as we proceed with this argument, we shall now and then find occasion to pause for a moment from the observation of the law of continuity in slowness of progress, to trace the marks of exquisite beauty which never fail to accompany the growth of the things created, and to observe the joy of life, in the midst of which, and by means of which, these creations themselves proceed. *end*

My brethren, if this stately slowness, amidst beauty and life, be a law of nature, one effect of such considerations upon any heart prepared and attuned by the Spirit of God must be, that even in the midst of the noise and tumult and hurry of the comings and goings in the world, that heart will once more hear the voice of Christ the Saviour, "Come ye aside with me into a quiet place, and rest awhile." Even so, Lord, abide with us.

I. And now, for the purposes of illustrating our argument, I must ask you for a moment to summon forth that divine creative faculty wherewith God has lovingly endued us for the clearer apprehension of his manifold works. In imagination I must ask you to ascend with me some old Silurian hill on the primæval earth, ages upon ages before God had fitted it for the abode of man. Picture to yourselves some mighty stream like the Ganges or the Amazon rolling its waters from far distant mountains into an ancient sea.



You observe the broad interminable belt of forest, which, stretching inland further than the eye can reach, rises in wild luxuriance from the swamps which fringe the stream. You may trace there the majestic pine, the graceful fern, the erect gigantic moss, fluted and towering columnar reeds, and a strange fantastic undergrowth, unknown to the flora of the age of man. The oak and the elm, the sycamore and the noble acacias of the west, you will not find, for as yet they are not created. There are no cattle grazing ‘upon a thousand hills,’ for God as yet has not clothed those hills with grass. In the thick jungle of these primæval forests you will not hear “the young lions roaring after their prey,” for as yet there is no meat provided for such by God. Those forests are tuneless of the glad carols of the birds, for as yet ‘the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind’ are not created for their food. Apart from the low croak of the reptile, and it may be the shrill chirp of many an insect, there is the hush of the silence of non-existence amidst those matted fronds, save when the voice of the Lord is heard in the thunder or the wind.

And if in the strength of this creative gift, you still keep your stand upon your watch-place for ages beyond your power to count, you will see nothing but the decay and the renewal of that interminable umbrageous belt. The ferns will fade, the gigantic moss and the columnar reed will shrivel, and the

pinces will decay and fall to their mother earth, but all this only to make way for another and more luxuriant growth. And so for ages.

At length the scene changes, and through some mighty pulsation, some throb of the earth's bosom, ordained of God, you see the waters of the broad swampy margin deepen and deepen, and then pile upon pile of forest growth and forest decay are submerged and gone. But wait awhile for the lapse of years: I know not how many, for science as yet has found no unit for the measure of cycles such as these. Whatever the periods may be, the divine faculty within us concentrates and apprehends them all as but a whiff of vaporous time. Wait awhile, and then upon the broad silted margin of the everlasting stream, piles upon piles of other forests again rise and decay, and by slow successive pulsations of the uncompleted earth in their turn disappear beneath the swollen tide.

Now if in spirit you saw all this, and only this, would you be able to decipher the meaning of the riddle? Would you imagine for instance, that all this mysterious prodigality of decay was a divine elaborate contrivance for the production and storing of fuel for the service of races of beings yet unborn? As you witnessed the successive growths and submergence of those forests, could you foresee or conceive in what way such an arrangement of things could one day materially conduce to the

development of the genius of intelligent creatures who were destined to be in remote futurity the last and chiefest denizens of the earth? And if some bright messenger from the throne of God stood at your side, and at the beginning of the vision had told you how in other forests of far different growth, the fowls of heaven would one day ‘make their nests, and sing among the branches;’ if he had told you that cattle would graze upon a thousand hills, and that ‘by the springs in the valleys the wild asses should quench their thirst;’ if he had told you that God would place upon the earth a being clothed in the majestic image of His own mind to be the Lord and master of created things; then I think that at the first you would receive the revelation though in wonder yet in thankfulness of spirit, and you would wait in the fulness of hope for the accomplishment of the promise. But if the vision proceeded through incalculable time, and for ages you had seen nothing but what, for want of better knowledge, seemed to you an endless prodigality of waste, would you in your impatience be tempted to say, Surely that bright messenger of God spoke to me in parables, for I see nothing, and for ages I have seen nothing but a constant inflexible uniformity of nature: as for the grass which he told me was to cover the hills, and the thousands of cattle which were to fill the plains, all such creations would be inconceivable miraculous

interruptions of that nature which for thousands of centuries I have observed unbroken in its course. And as for the advent of that being who is to be the Lord of that new earth, 'where now is the promise of his coming, for since the beginning of the creation all things continue as they were?'

My brethren, I have not been amusing you with some fantastic creation of the brain, but I have been reminding you of the mode of the Divine action during one stage of the Creation. And there are many like it. Be it remembered that to this knowledge of the Lord's ways we have attained through the righteous and loyal use of the Lord's gift. And one conclusion that we may draw from that knowledge is this, that God's mode of action in the material creation has been and is deliberate and slow, majestic in the composure of its leisureness. There is also another inference which I think naturally flows from the argument before us; it is one full of hope and encouragement to man, and with that I shall conclude. The inference is this;—as the *material* universe, so far as we see it, at length came forth from the Creator perfect in relation to its purposes, fraught with beauty and 'very good,' so also we may expect the progress of the *immaterial*, the intellectual part of us, though ordained to be equally deliberate and equally slow, will go on and on, embracing in intelligent perception one after another of the wonderful works of

God, improving and improving, not alone in the clearness and amount of its intelligence, but in the comprehensiveness of its grasp and the grandeur of its capacity.

And in like manner, notwithstanding there is so much to grieve and to disappoint in the sin, and the misery, and the degradation, and the perversion of God's gifts, which we see around us; notwithstanding the acknowledged slowness of the progress of Christianity; nevertheless, what I am permitted to see of the ultimately perfect results of a slow and deliberate action in other parts of the Creation, checks in me, and I hope in you, all despondency for the fate of our holy religion; it removes all doubt that the Gospel of the Cross of Christ, possibly by its own divine native force, shall ultimately triumph; and it animates us with a confident hope that the Spirit of Christ Jesus shall in the end subdue every heart to Himself, and then 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.'

While I have been speaking to you on these great topics, my brethren, it cannot but be that the thoughts of many hearts have been revealed to themselves. And are they not such as these? Wherefore this hurry of mine, and this feverish haste for the result? Is this work I am about, the work which my Father has given me to do?—then like all God's other works it is to be done with constancy,

with forethought, with deliberate patience. I will cast my bread upon the waters, not looking for the harvest to-morrow or the next day, but in the fullness of faith not doubting that I shall find it 'after many days.'

And I think something of the same tenour must have been passing among the thoughts of those of you who now sit where I well remember sitting a generation of men ago. Judging from my own heart and from my own recollection, young men stand in need of an ever-present heavenly help to check sometimes impatience, sometimes despondency, sometimes a proneness to judge before the time. To-day we have been considering the patience of God. In your finite measure, strive to walk in His footsteps. 'Commit thy way unto Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.' If there is one frame of mind stronger and happier than another, it is the mind 'stayed on God.' In the great Saviour's name, PRAY FOR THAT.



## LECTURE II.

### *THE SLOWNESS OF INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS.*

ISAIAH XI. 9 ; 2 PETER III. 8.

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

*But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

THE main subject before us is the analogy of slowness of progress in the Divine plan both of Nature and of Grace so far as we are able to apprehend it. I here use the word Nature in its larger sense, that is, not only as comprehending the material fabric of things created, but as including the human mind with its capacities, its energies, and its relations. And I speak of Grace as synonymous with the revelation accorded to us in the inspired books of the two covenants of God. If this continuity, if this analogy of a majestic leisurely progress be established, then another link will have been added to the golden chain of circumstantial evidence, which leads ultimately to the throne of the infinite, and enforces the conclusion

that the God of Nature and the God of the Old and of the New Testament is one and the same.

Last Sunday, I asked you to recal to mind the grandeur and the slowness of the process by which it was the will of the Creator to contrive and build up this beautiful world for the habitation and the service and the joy of man;—a divine work not executed after the fashion of the uncertain, feverish, spasmodic haste, with which for the most part we finite creatures construct our schemes, but every part of it manifesting the composure and quiet confidence of a Mind possessing resources unfailing, time unlimited, beneficence unrestrained. On one point at least we have the ‘sure word of prophecy,’ that as stage after stage of the creative process passed before the contemplation of the Creator, even He, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, pronounced it ‘very good.’ And I think I learn from the same Divine record, how the attendant spirits of the hierarchy of heaven ‘the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted in joy,’ taking up the chorus, IT IS VERY GOOD.

You will remember that the one particular stage of the Divine creative process which I took for the illustration of our argument was that in which the Creator, by the word of His power, was slowly but surely providing and filling those vast storehouses of mineral fuel which ages after would become a necessity for the dense and civilized populations of the earth. And I had another reason for selecting this

one particular stage out of many others which would have served equally well for the argument before us, and it was this. In the long cycles of the growth, the decay, and the submergence of those primæval forests, there may be heard by the mind's ear, by the ear of faith, a divine prophetic voice, that in far off time there would come to man—shall I call it a permission—shall I call it a command, to go forth and '*subdue the earth.*' When that command at length came from the mouth of God, they who heard it knew not the means ordained for its accomplishment. Again six thousand years roll away, and in the débris of those ancient forests, elaborated by a chemistry beyond the reach of man, there is found a store of potential energy whereby man subdues the earth and its waters and its winds, and compels, in a measure, even the fires of heaven to do the biddings of his genius. So, to my thoughts, and I trust also to yours, those old forests of the unformed earth become a heavenly sign, and by far the most ancient of prophecies; a prophecy reiterated ages afterwards in Genesis; a prophecy this day before your eyes in process of fulfilment.

My brethren, if I have detained you long upon these topics, it is because I hope I am not mistaken in their importance. It is by weapons said (but untruly said) to be furnished from the armoury of modern knowledge, that not alone the religion of the Cross of Christ, but the very existence of a personal Author and a personal Governor of Nature is assailed

or ignored; and therefore it seems well for us from that same armoury, to take down the shield forged and divinely tempered in the fires of a truer science, by which those spurious weapons are shattered and rebound. To ourselves also there arises an additional interest, in that whatever amount of truth there is in the argument so far as it is yet pursued, very much of it is derived from the labours, divinely blessed, of one<sup>1</sup>, who in honour still goes in and out among us, venerable by the weight of his years, and venerated in the light of our love.

(a) I proceed now to another point in the analogy before us. I have been so far speaking of deliberate slowness in the divine creative work, and I have now a few words to add regarding other analogies; connected with the *beauty and the joy of life* which everywhere accompany and pervade the process of creation itself. These lesser analogies are indeed subsidiary to the other and the greater one, but still they are too important to be overlooked; and I think I shall be able to shew that their co-existence in the material, the intellectual, and the moral constituents of the wide creation, is not fanciful but actual and substantial. They form the continuity of one plan.

There now arises the difficulty of a choice in the midst of a superabundance of material: a well instructed mind dwelling on such thoughts, soon

<sup>1</sup> Adam Sedgwick; in the fiftieth year of his Geological Lectures.

becomes oppressed with the exceeding weight of glory which herein surrounds him. When the Son of God came to visit us in great humility for our redemption, it was impossible that His glory should be hid: wherever he was found, a virtue went forth from Him, diffusing peace, healing the sick, and disclosing the traces of His divinity. So also, whenever in humility of heart and with instructed eye we follow the footsteps of the Eternal Father in His creative work, there we find not alone power and foresight and skill, but in the beauty and joy of life, on every side abounding, we discern the marks of a Father's tenderness and love. I dwell not now on the gracefulness wherewith He clothed those primæval ferns, and adorned them with the little jewels on their fronds; nor will I stop to speak of the joy of that busy, beautiful, multitudinous life which swarmed in those ancient seas, slowly building up those marbles of the mountain limestone which now serve for the pleasure and the use of man. From these I pass to the undulating downs of the South of England or to those even nearer to ourselves, rising sometimes to mountainous dimensions; and I ask you to reflect that there exists not a scrap, not an atom of the long line of those massive hills which has not been elaborated in the tissues of living beings, and by them extracted from the waters of an ocean, which but for that beneficent process would have become inimical to other life. And those beings



were happy :—happy up to the measure of their capacity ;—sportive in the joy of existence.

(β) And then look at the pierced microscopic urns<sup>1</sup>, curiously fashioned as a part of themselves and for their protection. Look at their vast variety, at their matchless shapes ;—yet, a score of them might float in the eye of a needle. How many of them, think you, formed the hills? But what means all this prodigality of beauty and life and joy? Is it because the Divine Architect cannot work without the splendour of His Majesty impressing a glory on the meanest of His creations? Or did He who gave the Old Law ‘by the disposition of angels,’ did He bid His angels sculpture those tiny vases, and design those beautiful forms? Was it they who pencilled the leaves, and who painted the plumage of the birds? And if you object that no eye of intelligence beheld those primæval atoms of life, beautiful in their existence, I answer, not so ; for in the fulness of God’s time you and I have seen them ; we have exhumed them from their ancient tombs ; we have seen them by the cunning, foreordained contrivance of man, and cold indeed must have been our spirits if we rose from the sight without the winged thought of a grateful heart ascending to the throne of the Eternal, adoring Him for these traces of the tenderness of a Father’s care.

In this way it pleased the Creator to form the

<sup>1</sup> The microscopic foraminifera.



hills; and the picture is a fair one. But I have not been speaking of these things merely because the picture is fair; I should have no right to do so; but I have dwelt so long upon them, because He who thus created the material hills, formed also the human mind, and God has clothed that mind also with ineffable beauty, and He has endued it with the power of creating and of re-creating, and of accumulating its creations, and of apprehending other created things, and He has conferred on it the inexpressible joy of intellectual life. And God who formed the hills and the human mind, has also formed in man a soul, the seat of his emotions, his affections; and when God for His Son's sake, breathes by His Spirit a regenerated life into the soul, then it is that it lives a true life in works of obedience and love, and is filled with a joy and a peace passing all understanding in the knowledge and communion of God.

II. We proceed now to the *Second* great element in the analogies before us; namely, to observe the slowness of the progress and of the accumulation of knowledge, acquired through the medium of the *intellect*. And then, subsidiary to this, which forms our present analogy, I shall ask you, in passing, to mark also the lesser analogies observable in the beauty of the divinely constructed instrument itself, and in the joy of life which it has pleased its Omnipotent Constructor shall accompany the righteous exercise of its powers.

It is quite natural that of those whom I address, some may demur to the proposition that the progress of the creative results of the intellect has all along, and by the Divine pre-arrangement, resembled, in the slowness of their evolution, the stately deliberate rising into being of the material world. The objection will probably be felt by two very different classes of mind, on two very opposite grounds. To some, the thought of this imputed tardiness, may seem to imply that I ungratefully forget the imperishable possessions bequeathed to us by the mighty intellects of ages long since passed away. Others, actuated by a different frame of mind, may conclude that I leave out of the account the astonishing rapidity of the acquisition and the accumulation of physical knowledge which seems ordained to be a distinctive mark of the present era, and which one of the ablest of our Statesmen<sup>1</sup> recently declared in the Senate, has

<sup>1</sup> "I will not now attempt to inquire into the causes, the particular causes, which have brought about that great advance. But I think I may say there is one sovereign cause which is at the bottom of everything, and that is, the increased application of science to social life. That I believe to be the main cause of the vast changes we have seen in the condition and feelings of classes. We are all familiar with the material results which the application of science has produced. They are prodigious; but, to my mind, the moral results are not less startling. The revolution in locomotion, which would strike us every day as a miracle if we were not familiar with it, has given the great body of the inhabitants of this country in some degree the enlightening advantages of travel. The mode in which steam power is applied to the printing-press in these days produces effects more startling than the first discovery of printing in the 15th century. It is science that has raised wages; it is science that has increased the desires and the opportunities

influenced the necessity of the great political measure of the day.

With regard to the intellectual achievement of the men of old, I would remark, that for very many ages after the gathering of mankind into distinct societies, the mental efforts of gifted men were confined, and I think necessarily and intentionally confined, to what is ethical, imaginative, and emotional in its character. In those remote ages, in that childhood of the world, surely it was of far greater moment for man to subdue *himself*, his habits and his manners, than essential to his well being to subdue the earth. Now the weapons for such a warfare are, thanks be to God, not necessarily forged in fires lighted only by some recondite application of the reasoning powers. Even now in this nineteenth century, it is said that the ballad and (I will add) the hymn possess a far more penetrating force than any marvel of physical discovery, or any essay of deepest philosophy, not alone to animate man to resolve and to act, but to nerve him to resist and to endure.

Viewed in this light, we can never too gratefully acknowledge the wisdom and the goodness of God, in providing and transmitting for the service of His church in every age, those matchless records of domestic life, that sacred bread consecrated on

of men; and it is science that has ennobled labour and has elevated the condition of the working classes." *Speech of Mr Disraeli on the introduction of the Reform Bill*, Feb. 1867.

the altar within the home, which formed the spiritual food of the old patriarchal life. The trials of Abraham, triumphant in his faith—the chequered life of Jacob, often irresolute in obedience, yet never wholly surrendering his love to his covenant God—the inimitable tale of Joseph gathering stores of wisdom in the school of suffering, and impregnating his whole being with trustfulness in Providence, from observing with the eye of faith the orderly vicissitudes of the lives about him, and hearing with the ear of faith the whisperings within him—these matchless stories you and I listened to in fond amazement soon as we sat on our mother's knees, and there learned to lisp the sacred name of Jesus. This divine biography has become to many of ourselves, as to the men of old, a sure talisman for the years of our maturer trials; sometimes reproducing itself in acts of bravery, or of self-denial, or of confidence in God.

And then there is the sublime poetry, the divine philosophy of the book of Job, fitting accompaniments or preludes to the magnificent burning imagery of the Hebrew Prophets. In all this most ancient literature, there is I feel throughout, the breathing of the Divinity; but I contend also that there are unmistakeable evidences therein of the advanced condition of the human mind, viewed in its ethical, its imaginative, and its emotional phase, some two or three thousand years ago.

Neither must we disallow that God left Himself not wholly without a witness among those who, for some inscrutable purposes, were the less favoured nations of mankind. The salutary effects upon the minds and manners of the young Athenians for instance, in committing to memory the songs of Homer, or in listening to the grand harmonies of their lyric and dramatic poets, ought never to be ignored by any man who is seeking to trace the ways of God with the ancient world. In the far East also, we have lately learnt, that coeval with, or even anterior to the poets of Greece, God was not unknown to the people in the stanzas of the sublime old Ar-yan Hymns. In the attempt therefore to establish the great analogies before us we are bound to take such phenomena, or as I would venture to call them such divine pre-arrangements, into the account. To me they suggest not so much imperfection of result, as the beneficent inter-adaptations of the childhood of ancient social life.

And if you seek for more than this you must remember that, in the day when these phases of the human mind flourished in their beauty, the steam-hammer and the Atlantic cable would have been as utter an anachronism, and as impossible a prolepsis, as the mammal would have been in the primæval forests of the yet unformed earth.

In forming our estimate of ancient intellectual



progress, it must not be forgotten, that even admitting the correctness of our chronology, mankind must have existed at least beyond three thousand years upon the earth before Pythagoras taught them the fundamental theorem of the first elements of Geometry. Yet this science depends on no skilful observation with the mechanism of elaborate instruments, but, on the quiet introspection, the contemplation of the mind alone.

And if you point to the Athenian sages, worthy as they are of all modern respect and of modern study, and unsurpassed as we must admit them to be by the acutest and most eloquent writers of this nineteenth century, nevertheless I fear the admission is owing to the fact that after the lapse of six thousand years neither the ancient nor the modern thinkers have been able to penetrate far into the law of the structure and of the operations of the human mind. Herein the modern philosopher is now not much further advanced than was the ancient sage. These all have been weaving

systems, each in its degree  
Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn<sup>1</sup>.

It required, in the counsels of God, full two thousand years after Plato, before Newton was permitted to discover and establish the law of gravitation; and I, for one, am animated by at least the hope, I might even venture to call it the conviction, that in

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth, *Excursion*, Bk. iv.



the day which He has prepared, God will illuminate the mind of some favoured servant to unveil the psychological secrets which Plato and his successors hitherto have missed. Should it be in our day, who of us would not say with the Athenian statesman, When the discoverer comes I will be his lover and his follower<sup>1</sup>? I pass by then the great poets, the ethical and historical writers of antiquity: they were God's great instruments for subduing the emotions and the manners of the childhood of mankind. As yet the time to learn the knowledge of God in His material work, and thereby literally to subdue the earth, had not arrived.

It was a saying of Kepler's, conceived no doubt in his own quaint mind with greater reverence than his words imply, that it pleased God to wait 6000 years for an astronomer. And Kepler was right in the thing that he meant. For, judging from what we are permitted to see of the ways of God, it was not in the pre-arrangements of Divine Providence to endue Kepler and his greater successor, the author of the *Principia*, with genius and patience, until such time as materials should exist fitted for the right exercise of the penetrating understandings wherewith they were inspired. I think you may always find, if you look for it, some anterior preparation both for the time of each great discovery and in the minds of the discoverers themselves. It is

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Alcib.* II. ad finem.

mainly to the exigences of a dense population and the struggles of men to share in the advantageous positions and conveniences of social life, that in this nineteenth century we owe those astonishing applications of the most subtle speculations of the philosopher to the commonest appliances of art.

Perhaps it is unknown to you that the incredible smallness of cost at which copies of the Holy Scriptures are multiplied sometimes to the amount of millions, in this very University, is owing mainly to a process of the most refined chemistry, and to a material, both of which were unknown to our immediate fathers. To the previous studies of Black we men of this day are at length indebted for that form of the mighty earth-subduing engine which was the subsequent contrivance of Watt. Without Wollaston's ingenious manipulation of platina some half century ago, it is scarcely too much to say that at this moment the two terrestrial hemispheres would not as yet have been linked together by the Atlantic cable; photography would have been to us as a fading toy; and that marvellous philosophy by which we are permitted to analyze the materials of the sun and of the stars would have been numbered among the dreams of some credulous enthusiast.

These boons, bestowed by the Great Father upon His children, have come to us only in the fulness of time. It is only after the lapse of 6000 years that God's intelligent creatures are beginning to

apprehend some little of their Creator's commandment, so 'exceeding broad,' Subdue the earth. By a rare alchemy, guided by a rarer genius, man now converts the clays<sup>1</sup> of the fields into instruments of research to measure the courses of the stars; from the materials of the hills<sup>2</sup> he evolves a light, vying with the brilliance of the sun, and with the elements of water he melts and he moulds at his will, masses<sup>3</sup> of a stubborn metal which heretofore had refused to yield to the fires of the hottest furnace.

But why do I venture to speak of such things as these from so sacred a place, and on this the best day of all the seven? My brethren, believe me it is not alone because in some form or other these topics are necessary for the establishing of the great analogies before us, but because I am convinced that few things conduce more to the maintenance of a child-like, reverential walk as in the presence of the Great Father, than tracing and acknowledging the finger of His power in the works which proceed from His gift of intellect to man. I well know that Divine grace is a higher effluence, and for sinful man a more needful effluence from God than genius; I know moreover that all knowledge is to us but loss in comparison with the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord; nevertheless each fresh discovery of a great fact or a great truth, is

<sup>1</sup> Aluminium (Bronze).

<sup>2</sup> Magnesium.

<sup>3</sup> The processes of M. Deville in the manufacture of Platina.

a disclosure of some fresh instance of the goodness and greatness of God, and is as the setting of a new and imperishable jewel in the diadem of Him who is Eternal Truth.

Two worlds are ours: 'tis only sin  
 Forbids us to descry  
 The mystic heaven and earth within,  
 Plain as the sea and sky.

Thou who hast given me eyes to see,  
 And love this sight so fair,  
 Give me a heart to find out Thee,  
 And read Thee everywhere:

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

And a mind to blend with outward life  
 While walking at thy side.

An opinion has recently been stated by an eminent divine, who for his piety has deservedly gained the ear of the Church, that the discovery of Gravitation was, after all, the result of an accident. Another theological writer of even greater reputation appears to be convinced that the flash of genius which accompanies a great invention, arises from the momentary help of a divine inspiration. I do not deny, nay the Scriptures constantly affirm, and the eye of faith as constantly discerns, the pervading influence of God's ever-present help. Nevertheless I think that a closer and more extended observation would have led both these excellent divines to another conclusion, and one far nearer to the truth of the fact. For, such accidents as a great discovery never fall to the lot of the idle mind, never to the

unobservant, never to the unprepared. And as to the flash of genius, the Great Father has so constituted the minds of His children, that it is only after revolving and revolving, it is only after the long and patient trial and rejection of many a combination, that the light of the discovery at last breaks in upon the thoughts. And at the last it comes like a flash, simply because each newly discovered truth resembles a point rather than a line or a surface, and when first really discerned is discovered as a whole.

The truth I am convinced is, that the knowledge of God in His manifold works is part of a scheme preordained by wisdom and love, imperfectly comprehended by us who are in the midst and form a part of it, and proceeding to its destined inscrutable end in the slow stateliness of a kingly march. As the appointed fulness of time approaches for each fresh disclosure of the Creator's Majesty and the Creator's Will in His creation, you will always find that a mysterious and ill-defined tension pervades the minds of thinking men, and the wave of thought proceeds in its uneasy throbbing course, until at length reaching the haven of some prepared and disciplined and gifted intellect, it there breaks up into sparkles of light and truth. In this way, the knowledge of God in His works has proceeded, and I doubt not will continue to proceed, until at length it shall encircle and cover the earth as the



waters cover the sea. And still there is an ocean and an ocean beyond:—methinks Angels are there, and Christ's redeemed will join them.

And now for our conclusion for to-day. It is recorded of the great Struve of Pulkowa—and although what I am about to say greatly concerns each one of us, still to you, my younger brethren, I think it speaks with a peculiar emphasis;—it is, I say, recorded of Struve the Astronomer of Dorpat and Pulkowa, that towards the close of a long and honourable life, and when the decline of his physical powers had set in, most of the numerous dialects and languages which he had acquired in the course of a laborious youth, recurred to his memory in so unimpaired a form, that he could repeat to his friends long passages from the Hebrew Prophets and from the writers of Greece and Rome, and converse in many dialects of the north, which for thirty or forty years before he had never used. The years and the scenes of his childhood were arranged before him as in a picture or a map. Such, young men, is that bright undying intellect with which you are entrusted, an effluence from the breath of God. ‘When I consider, I am afraid.’ Surely you are looking to it well that nothing which can hurt or defile, stamps its indelible mark on that which one day *may* be unfolded to the gaze of your own mind, and which at the Great Day *must* be scrutinized before the Throne of Christ. If the stains of sin be there, as



the stains of sin are with the best of us, surely you will in heart and mind wash them away with that precious blood which the Great Judge himself once shed for that very purpose upon the Cross. I know that I am only interpreting your own thoughts, and your own prayer to the Spirit of Grace when I say: 'Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be alway acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.'

## LECTURE III.

### *THE SLOWNESS OF MORAL PROGRESS.*

ISAIAH XI. 9; 2 PETER III. 8.

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

THUS far we have established the analogy between the stately processes of the material creation and the progress of the knowledge of the Creator, derived through the contemplation of His works by the intellect of man. By creation you will all along have understood that I mean, not that solemn exercise of the Divine power by which the Creator evoked into being matter and force;—though whatever else matter and force may be, they are at least the exhibitions of God's will;—nor am I, in the term creation, in any degree referring to the grand speculations or guesses of the elder Herschel or of his great cotemporary, who endeavoured, it may be with little success, to reduce those thoughts to the domain

of his own subtle geometry; but I am speaking of those successive stages in the divine plan of the earth's development whereby there was at every stage a fitting existence of beauty and life and happiness, each stage forming only the necessary platform for the next, until the whole beneficent arrangement culminated in this fair earth of ours, compacted and fitted for a being endued with latent vast capacities, who by the contemplation of what he beheld, and the subjugation of the earth to his own necessities or convenience, was ordained gradually to raise his intellectual being to a higher and a nobler life. Man, the first creature upon that earth conscious of his own existence, and carrying within him the credentials of his affinity to God.

But this accumulation of the knowledge of God in His works, this development of the plenitude of intellectual life we have seen was ordained to be slow, so that the fable of Minerva starting into being armed in all the maturity of her beauty, was the conception rather of a childish than a sagacious philosophy. Nevertheless I know it has occasioned perplexity, not to say pain, to some minds, to feel that men so gifted, so earnest, so loyally industrious as Plato and Aristotle for instance, were not permitted to share in at least some small portion of that insight of the mechanism of nature which we moderns enjoy. The true reply seems to be that the possibility of such an anticipation of physical knowledge, implies the build-

ing up of an imaginary world wholly different from what the world is, or perhaps could be. To have placed gravitation, for instance, before the mind of Plato or his cotemporaries, would have been not very far different from placing a delicate balance in the lap of an infant, or a chronometer in the hands of a company of children. We must be content to regard the present state of things as a scheme, or even as part of a scheme still going on and imperfectly comprehended, and our wisdom is to abstain from the bootless task of building up imaginary worlds. Those ancient sages in their own day were true to their own calling, and that calling came from God; had they failed to obey the call, our modern vantage ground would have been on a far lower level; and, on the other hand, I for one believe the days will come when our knowledge and our appliances and our inventions will seem to our successors worthy of that pity which sometimes we complacently bestow on the men of old.

If an illustration were needed of this providential concomitancy of invention and discovery with the rise of new necessities in man, I know not where a happier one could be found than in a circumstance now passing before our eyes and in which there are some points of peculiar interest to ourselves. When Captain Cook, about a century ago, first visited the wild shores and the wilder Maoris of New Zealand, very many months had been required to

complete the tedious voyage, and yet that slowness of transit occasioned no complaint as disproportioned to the exigences of the day. But now that many thousands of our countrymen have colonized those islands of the Antipodes, carrying with them our language, our literature, and our Bible—and where these are, there is liberty and there the knowledge of God—in this day of the spread of population and the extension of commerce, associated with many a concomitant development of science, a brief passage of *seven* short weeks will suffice for our own Augustine of the South to reach the scenes of his distant mission; and the same incredibly rapid voyage will restore him (we trust) to the Church of his native land, here to continue at the call of his countrymen, a work not less laborious, nor less important, and as we pray, not less apostolic.

(a) I now pass to a brief consideration of those lesser and subsidiary analogies of which I spoke last Sunday. They come to us naturally and like undertones or harmonics to the fundamental note of the greater thought. And herein what first impresses my own mind at this moment is the creative power of the human intellect; creative in the sense I explained at the commencement of the discourse; a power divinely implanted, a heavenly gift involving responsibility to the Giver. I say then every truth evolved by the intellect, every fresh accession of the knowledge of God in His works or His ways,

partakes far more of the nature of a permanent creation than do those massive hills which the corals or the molluscs or the diatoms elaborated in their tissues, and filtered from the ancient seas. The hills shall one day be dissolved, but the truth shall remain ; the sun may grow dark and this earth and all that is therein may be burnt up and exhale into a vapour, but the knowledge of what God is, and of what God has done, must shine and exist for ever.

It might indeed have pleased the Divine Creator, as great poets and great artists and great theologians, true to the light of their day, once supposed,—it might have pleased the Divine Creator, by the fiat of His will, to call the mountains into sudden being, and with that one irresistible word ‘Hitherto’ he might have bidden the waters, in the tide of one vast wave, retire to their destined bounds. The thought of a magnificent embodiment of instantaneous obedience such as this may impress ourselves, and very properly did impress the men before us, with a sense of the awful majesty, the irresistible might of Him who issued the command ; but I think I discern much more of the true lineaments of the Eternal Father, such as the Divine Son in lowly form manifested Him in the streets of Nazareth, in the homes of Bethany, and on the slopes of Olivet, when I observe His benign will has been to construct so much of this fair earth not by the fiat of His irresistible word, but through the gentler



processes of quiet life and pleasurable existence. I think I see more of power under the control of wisdom, more of tenderness doing the will of a most loving mind. In the one case there would have been written on the portals of the Creation, GOD IS POWER. In Creation as it is, I hear evangelic whisperings from the still small voice that GOD IS LOVE.

And just after the spirit of the same law it seems to me that God has clothed the human intellect with a creative power. He has endued it with desires, longings, appetencies, and these all by a beneficent arrangement are ever craving for satisfaction; and there is but one object that can provide this satisfaction, and that object is knowledge, the knowledge of truth—and truth is of God. And so, as these elements of truth pass one after another through the ethereal tissues of the human mind and are elaborated there, joy is diffused throughout the spirit of the man, the joy of intellectual life, and encouragement and strength are laid in store for fresh attempts. Thus knowledge is built up: the knowledge of God in His Works, through the medium of happiness and life. A temple of unfading Glory to the God of Truth.

There yet remains another point connected with the divine plan for the development of the intellectual powers which seems to me too important to omit even in this cursory glance, which is all that the occasion admits. It again stands related partly to that

ancient command "subdue the earth," and partly to the contrast between the methods in which the Universal Father clothes and provides and cares for His unintelligent creatures, and the methods by which, with a loving forethought, He not only enables but compels man to clothe and provide and care for himself. The lilies of the field and the beasts of the forest are endued with no faculties to toil or to spin, but God feeds the one with food convenient, and the others He clothes in their beautiful array. To man alone God has given the hand to toil and the mind to construct the machine wherewith he may spin and he may weave, and it is by this appointed toiling and spinning and inventing, that the energies and faculties of his mind are ordained to be evoked and enlarged. For his fuel and his metals he must delve the earth, and contrive all curious appliances in the effort. If he would measure the earth or cross the seas, he must bring every faculty of his intellect to the task, he must master recondite sciences, and even gauge the stars. Surely this contrast between man and the beasts that perish must have often struck you as you read that magnificent Ode on the Creation in the 104th Psalm. You remember how the inspired poet describes, with touches of inimitable beauty, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air as all waiting upon God for their clothing, for their food, and for their habitations: 'that Thou givest them,' he says, 'they gather, Thou openest

Thine hand, and they are filled with good'; and then into the sacred poem the Psalmist at last introduces Man, Man the Lord of this fair Creation, but in how different a guise! we feel as well as see the picture; 'The young lions seek their meat from God,' but 'Man,' he says, 'Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour till the evening,' for it is by his labour that his MIND, no less than his hand, is to be 'filled with good.'

( $\beta$ ) Contrast now for a moment one or two of the latest results of the genius and the toil of man effected only after the lapse and the efforts of many centuries; contrast them, I say, with what the Great Father, ages upon ages ago, provided for His lower creatures, who had no power to fashion it for themselves. Think, for instance, of that latest, saddest, yet most necessary contrivance of man, think of his war-ships sheathed in plates of armour—you have here the results of the concentration and of the taxings and strainings of his intellect for many years; yet in the old Devonian seas, nigh to the dawn of terrestrial time, there swam many a creature clothed by its Maker in an armour relatively as strong, and as compactly and as ornately set as the iron plating of our ships. Man, in the nineteenth century, corrugates his iron for lightness and for strength, but he is anticipated by what God has provided in the microscopic feathers of a moth which flitted among the primæval ferns. By a most recondite chemistry

we men of this day produce wondrous pigments and dyes of a surpassing hue, but a beetle which crept by the side of the ancient moth, and working in no laboratory of his own, puts the chemist well nigh to shame. Thus it is that the Universal Father who houses and clothes and feeds the ravens beyond the fashion of a regal bounty, impels with a loving compulsion the being whom He made 'a little lower than the angels' to labour and to clothe and to house himself. Not that the results of his labour terminate in the mere tissues of his loom, or in the grandeur of his palaces, or in the curious art, or in the sagacious discovery, but that, the exertion of intelligence is appointed to be one great means of approximating the mind of the creature by a gradual ascent to the mind of the Creator. Here then lies the true intent, here lies the blessing, the true dignity of intellectual toil. It is

A road  
To bring us daily nearer God.

Surely then the life of this spiritual ethereal intellect thus cared for, thus elaborated, thus informed with the mind of God, cannot be limited to the threescore years and ten. Can this bright intellect which peers more and more into the glory of the Divine; which apprehends the same truths which are apprehended by the Infinite, which feels itself ever in contact with the unsubstantial, the immaterial; with its powers ever growing, its conceptions ever deepening, its as-

pirations ever enlarging;—is it conceivable, that the continuity of such an existence can be snapped in a moment? In passionate hope, ‘in groanings that cannot be uttered,’ it clings, it appeals to the Throne of its Creator and its Father, ‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.’ Though breathless it must breathe.

III. Thus far our thoughts have been confined to such knowledge of God as may be derived from the *intellectual* contemplation of His works in *Nature*, and we see that He is pleased to work now after the same model as it pleased Him to work in primæval times. In this volume of the book of Nature we read many pages regarding His power, and His beneficent forethought, nay we believe we observe many traces even of His tenderness, and we find there some reasons for at least the hope that our true being is immortal. But there are deeper and more anxious questions than even these, and to these Nature when questioned returns no reply. Does this Great Being care for *me*? For me as distinguished from all other? Will He hear my prayer? Can such as I am hold communion with such as He is? Have I truly a life beyond the grave, and if a life, what life?

We know indeed that these questions, and others like them, are all answered in a collection of sacred Books, professing to record with undeviating accuracy a series of Revelations which God from time



to time has made to man, informing him of as much of His Divine Nature, and of as much of His Will and of His relation to His responsible creatures as it is good, or it may be, even as much as it is possible for them to know. But the question then arises, do these Revelations of this higher and *moral* conception of God proceed in a manner analogous with the modes in which He has certainly been pleased to convey the lower and intellectual conceptions? I think we shall find the analogy complete. In the successive Revelations contained in the Sacred Books, equally with the other pre-arrangements made for the intellectual advancement of man, we find a slow and a stately progress, ever adapted to the necessities and capacities of the recipients, ever associated with happiness and life, and ever surrounded with the concomitant of beauty.

To substantiate this assertion by a chronological series of precise quotations from the Holy Scriptures would exhaust our time and weary our patience. We must therefore be contented with a sketch, and even that sketch I intend to be rather suggestive to the thoughts of others than a complete exposition of even my own sentiments.

The first revelation then to which I shall refer, is that given to man in the days of the Patriarchs—it is that of God in the family. An unseen but ever-present Divine Being watching over its members by His Providence, and by a gracious



condescension entering into a covenant with them that if they would keep His statutes He would never fail to do them good, and ultimately would make their seed a blessing to all the families of mankind. What those statutes were, we know not, possibly they were divinely written on the intuitions of their hearts. I think I find no earlier form of Revelation than this: if our thoughts move onwards two thousand years and recur to Bethany, and to the one perfect Divine Man who there lived and moved as the friend in the family, perhaps this form of Revelation may be regarded even as the last; but how far transcendent in the clearness of its heavenly light!

It is possible also that in those two great names by which God was known in the earliest times, Elohim and Jehovah, we may trace some progress in the knowledge of God, rising from the earlier conception of power, to the higher thought of Divine eternity of being; but that is a chapter yet to be written in theology.

From God revealed in the family, we pass, after the lapse of centuries, to God the unseen yet formal Governor of the nation. And now comes in the written law, and with the law, the ever-present sense of sin; and the ordinance of a grand priestly ceremonial for the putting away of sin, and with the priestly ceremonial, an onward looking for some great reality of which the multiplicity of varied

sacrifice could only be a shadow and a type. The 'schoolmaster' in fact, which was ultimately 'to lead to Christ.' It was now that God was pleased to reveal to His favoured servant that magnificent conception of His essence which became the treasure of the Church of God, until the higher and the final manifestation made by His Son in the days of His flesh. "Thou canst not see my face and live, but I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee," and the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." And for my own part I know few things in the Old Testament more touching than the language of the beautiful metaphors in which Moses records his final experience of God's watchfulness and fatherly care over his people during the years of their discipline in the wilderness. 'The Lord kept them,' he said, 'as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so Jehovah alone did lead them.'

Such then I conceive to be the spirit of the old Revelation which God was pleased to give of Himself and of His will under the Mosaic Economy. And here I may say in passing that I think the true key to the solution of the chief difficulties which

some persons say they have felt regarding the authenticity of Deuteronomy is to remember that Moses therein is recording the results of the experience of the forty years of his government of the Israelites, and of the practical working of the Divine Law. Many new circumstances had arisen during the wanderings of the people, many new experiences had been gained, and no wonder if in wisdom some Divine enactments were at length to be modified, and others were to be added now at the end of their journey. Surely it was in accordance with the natural course of things and with the progress of the Divine Revelation that it should be so. To me it seems a fatal mistake to regard the Divine Revelation of God's will as at any time beyond the requirements and capacities of the age, or ever intended to be stationary and complete, until in the fulness of time Christ came in the flesh, once for all to manifest the Father to His children. Viewed in this light, in the light that is of its containing the experience of the busy and observant life of its human author, I could no more believe Deuteronomy to be a pious fraud of some later prophet, than I could believe Newton to have written his *Principia* as a parody on the laws of Nature. In a question of this sort, which after all is one of internal evidence, I would not greatly distrust the far-reaching insight of a well-disciplined heart, while I should bear in mind that the criticism of

philology may be fallacious, and certainly as yet is incomplete.

The Revelations of God's will in the Law and in the Mosaic ritual are now left for many years to work their way into the hearts and manners of the people. As usual in every nation, and our own, alas, is far from an exception, the old war between selfishness and the love of God soon begins to be waged, with many an oscillation on either side. On the whole the tide of the knowledge of God among the people advances, and in due time culminates in those Divine Songs of the sweet Psalmist of Israel which have become a sacred possession of the Church of God in every age. But we must remember that it was four hundred years from the song of Moses to the greater hymns of David. Breathed into David's heart by the breath of God, what wonder if they find a home and express the feelings in all other hearts touched by the same Spirit of Grace? There are no such burning words as theirs wherein to pour forth the yearnings of the heart for the knowledge and the presence of God. From the Spirit of God those songs arose, to the throne of God those songs return. They ascend to Him in the times of our distress, in the times of our doubts, and in the hours of our thanksgiving and our joy. In the darkest, saddest, greatest hour this earth ever witnessed, they furnished the language for the dying emotions of Him,

who upon the Cross, was taking away the sins of the world.

And now there comes a long sad time of declension and even of apostasy among God's people, in spite of the abundance of the revelation. It may be that prosperity was the touchstone shewing that the baser metal had not yet been removed from their hearts. All of us know that sympathy with joy requires a higher frame of mind than sympathy with grief, and assuredly prosperity reveals the thoughts of many hearts more than the battle with adversity. And so Israel in his prosperity fell into sin, and sin brings disorder in its train. One of the greatest of Israel's teachers ascribes his fall to those same three things which are the occasion of many a fall among ourselves—'pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness.' And now their covenant God, ever mindful of His ancient promise, sends to His people one after another of the long line of those wonderful men, the Hebrew Prophets. The importunity with which He sent them, God himself describes in the strong but touching metaphor "rising up early I spake unto you." With lips touched by the burning coal from the altar of God, they inveigh with a matchless fervour against the sin which was cankering the heart of the people; they speak of the purity of God and of the purity of spirit which alone can see Him; they insist upon the service of the heart and on the utter vanity of mere



ceremonial rite. "I delight not," says Jehovah, speaking through the mouth of the chiefest of their number, "I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats; incense is an abomination unto me; your appointed feasts my soul hateth; wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well." They almost anticipate the very teachings of the Gospel. And these continue for nearly three hundred years, and then the Old Testament is closed and there is no prophet more. The revelation of God in the old covenant is complete. It began in Eden, it grew clearer and clearer for a few thousand years till it reached the streaks of the dawn in Malachi. It still required the lapse of centuries before the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings.

To such as you, my brethren, and in a review so brief, it is unnecessary for me to speak of the promise of the Hope of Israel which always accompanied the revelation and shared in every accession to its clearness. But there is another thought which in your presence I think I have no right to evade, but which certainly I shall refer to with diffidence. What knowledge, what hope had the Ancient Saints of a future life? This is a question which in these days of free enquiry has distressed many an anxious mind. I admit the traces of such a hope are few and indistinct, yet they are not wholly wanting. I will not now stop to cite them, but I would rather endeavour



to account for the absence of their more definite expression. I have already said, at an earlier part of this discourse, that the main religious thought in the patriarchal dispensation must have been that of an invisible Divine Being ever present and in covenant with the family. The very tents in which they lived, the altar which stood in their midst, must day by day have reminded them that it was the call of their covenant God which had placed them in the land of their pilgrimage; as they journeyed from place to place, in every crisis of their histories, ever and anon there was the vision of their God, whether at Mamre, or Bethel, or Hebron. And when the great family, the clan, became a nation, then there was the sense of the presence of their own Covenant God in the nation. They felt His presence in the Miracles before Pharaoh; they felt His presence on that night of death and of deliverance, 'much to be remembered;' with the eye of faith they saw Him in the Pillar of Fire and in the cloud, they saw Him in the Tabernacle, they saw Him in the holy rites of their religion, they saw Him in their sacred books, they saw Him in their Prophets. Now could a people thus circumstanced, even so much as suspect the possibility of a break in the continuity of the relation between themselves and this their ever-existing Covenant God? Is it imaginable that a people, the daily language of whose choicer spirits was MY God, Thou God of my Fathers, could suppose

this divine relation with all the hopes which it inferred, closed for ever with the close of the three-score years and ten, suddenly vanishing in the cold isolation of the grave? I confess myself unable to conceive it.

Is this then the thought to which our Saviour refers, when He said in reply to the Sadducees, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"? I think it is at least a part of its meaning. You remember also when the disciples saw their risen Lord on the shore of the lake by the side of the mysterious fire and the meal prepared—none of them ventured to ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing it was the Lord. Does this also express in some degree the feelings of the saints of old regarding their immortality? I think it does.

The time permits but few words more, and I conclude.

We have seen how the Revelation of God in His grace to man proceeded under the old covenant with that same slow but effectual progress which is equally observable in the Revelation of God in His works, and during the completion of those manifold works themselves. These all bear the impress of one and the same Omniscient, Omnipotent, loving mind, working the good pleasure of His will in a secure, and definite, and stately plan. I know not, brethren, what impression may have possessed your own feelings while in spirit

we have together traversed so many fair provinces of nature and of grace, but the one thought which has never for long been absent from my own mind is that expressed so touchingly by David after long survey of the bright host of heaven from his native hills ; ‘ Lord, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man, that Thou visitest him ? ’ There must be something inherently great in a Being for whom the Lord of the universe has cared with all this care ; not indeed man in his ruin, but man such as he is when viewed in the light which streams from Bethlehem, from Olivet, and from the cross upon Moriah ; man redeemed, man restored to his true, his better self, man sanctified, man with the Christ within the heart, man the child of God, man the Heir of glory. Surely nothing that is mean or paltry or depraved can have a Natural home within the spirit of such a being. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are pure, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, he will think on these things.

## LECTURE IV.

### *THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF THE GOSPEL.*

ISAIAH XI. 9; ST. MARK IV. 33.

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

*And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.*

IN the last discourse I said that occasionally the Hebrew prophets almost anticipated the very teachings of the Gospel. This qualified form of statement I adopted not without design. For you will find scattered up and down the prophetic writings and among the inspired outpourings of the Psalms, many expressions, which if you do not examine them with a scrupulous eye, might be mistaken for the pure manifestations of Christianity itself. In like manner also in the writings of some heathen sages and poets both of the eastern and western worlds, there exist moral sentiments presenting a phase of so much beauty and truth that it has been asserted again and again, though always unadvisedly, that no advance has been made in ethical philosophy during two

thousand years. I cannot doubt that this intercalation of evangelic truth has formed a part of the divine plan for the moral welfare of mankind, inasmuch as we have the testimony of St Paul that thereby God has never left 'himself without a witness in the world,' and before that witness the thoughts of men in all ages have accused or else excused themselves. These gropings after moral truth have in their degree resembled the preludes and foreshadowings of thought, which we have seen invariably precede invention or discovery in the intellectual world. Fragments of truth they are, and scattered lights from the throne of God, which it was part of the divine arrangement for Christ Jesus to adjust and complete into integral portions of the Image of the Father, whom He was commissioned to declare to man.

At length then we have arrived at the final revelation of God's will to man. Final, because it is not, like the precepts of the patriarchal covenant, written by the finger of God on the intuitions of the mind, and transmitted by a family tradition; nor again is it, like the Mosaic Law, digested and written, partly as a code, and partly as the directory of a ritual; but the dispensation of the Gospel is final to us because it is the record and the embodiment of a life at once human and divine, and exposed in both these elements of the human and the divine, to the clear gaze of man. Final also because in that one perfect divine

life all the great promises and types and prophecies during the four thousand years of the former covenants converge and are fulfilled. The Son of God in great humility clothes himself in the form of the Son of Man : in the language of the most precise of our creeds, 'He takes the manhood into God.' *As the Son of God*, Christ in his life manifests the character of the Eternal Father up to the extent that our human faculties can bear : 'He that hath seen me,' says He, 'hath seen the Father.' *As the Son of Man*, Christ in all points being made like unto his brethren, is in all points tempted as they are tempted, yet exhibits the model of a perfect, sinless human being. For three and thirty years he consorts with men. Being found in fashion as a child he throws the mantle of its true sanctity over childhood, so that the mother as she gazes upon her babe, recognizes its affinity to God : in the form of a boy he exhibits and enforces the true sanctity of boyhood : in the full maturity of a human being he sanctifies and combines the gentler graces of womanhood in union with the sterner and more penetrating virtues of the man. To crown the whole he permits this pure and spotless life by wicked hands to be brought to an end in a cruel death, partly as the test and consummation of the self-sacrifice of his matchless love, 'for greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend ;' and partly as that mysterious expiatory



victim which in the severe counsels of God was necessary for the taking away of sin. The Cross had been the one great fact pre-shadowed since the world began; the Cross will form the one great retrospect as long as the kingdom of God endures. 'Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission.' You ask me—you ask yourselves—Why so? The heart may guess, but is speechless in the expression of its guess. 'Which things the angels desire to look into!' We bow the head, we wonder and we adore.

But it ends not here. In life the Holy Jesus had done battle with the Prince of Evil: the Tempter had come to him in every form in which he comes to the sons of men, but he was foiled in his attempts, for there was 'nothing' in Him; no canker spot of sin, on which he could fasten, as there is in the sons of men—in you and in me. In death and the grave the contest is renewed, but Jesus wrested the keys of hell and of death from the power of darkness; 'for it was not possible He could be holden' of it, and in His resurrection we have the foreshadowing of our own. For a few days he once more went in and out among his disciples, not now as before in the form of a familiar friend, but at rarer intervals and with a significant reserve, sufficient indeed for them to see the wounds on His hands, on His side, and His feet—sufficient for them to recognize the power and tenderness and loving forethought, so often felt and so well remem-

bered, but insufficient to gratify the slightest movements of a curious spirit. At length He leads them out to the spot that had become the most sacred to their memories, and there in the act of blessing them a cloud removes Him out of their bodily sight, and a thin film penetrable by the eye of faith is all that separated them or which separates us from the abode of His glory. From that abode, unseen but ever nigh, He has never ceased to distribute the gifts of His Spirit among those who seek Him; the gift of penitence, of pardon, of inner strength, of joy, of peace; the gift of sacramental grace in the holy rite, the gift of the foretaste of the life of heaven.

Thus then this Gospel wherein the true God and the true Man are manifested; this Gospel wherein Life and Immortality are brought to light; this Gospel, I say, is the culmination of God's never-ceasing acts of grace to His sinful creatures, after the lapse of four thousand years.

Twenty more centuries have now nearly rolled away, and what has been and what is now its reception in the world? They who are familiar with the gross and predominant pollution of the heathen world, they who read the terrible description which St Paul gives of it in his Epistle to the Romans, and then compare those appalling sins with the present moral condition, sad though it be, of the more highly civilized portions of the world, cannot, I think, fail to thank

God and take courage when they view the progress of Christianity, slow as it has been. They who confine their survey to the habits of men in the narrower circles which surround their own homes may in the weakness of their hearts be ready to despair. One small boat on an inconspicuous lake in a narrow corner of the world, once sufficed to contain the whole Christian Church. Can any one venture to number those who now in their hearts bow to the name of Jesus? Put the matter to the test, can you, after all your despondency, think of any one familiar spot in this fair land of ours, within a radius shall I say of ten miles, or of five, or even of a single mile, where you cannot find the blessed light of a Christian example? I confess, I cannot.

In all the polished philosophic writings of ancient times you cannot find so much as the word which expresses the thought of 'sin' or of 'holiness' in reference to God. Is there a village now within the civilization of Europe where those words in the pregnancy of their meaning may not be heard as surely as the Lord's day returns. True, it required the force of Christianity during some nineteen centuries to abolish slavery; but it is abolished, or it is hiding its head in the shame of stealth. It required many hundred years for the establishment of a hospital in Christendom; but hospitals *are* established, and they abound. It required more than double that period to evolve the

idea of a Sunday school, yet they are more numerous now than the villages of England. It seems to us late in the day of Christianity, when John Howard first understood the exceeding breadth of his Lord's words, 'I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me.' I presume there is scarcely a prison in Europe now unvisited by some rays from the light of Christian charity. It seems late in the day for Christians to have understood their Lord's command, Go ye forth into every nation, and make disciples for me—nevertheless late as is the day, the municipal revenues of the richest city in the world would not suffice to maintain the Christian missions of the present hour. It is too true that as yet the sword is far from beaten into the sickle—nevertheless wars cannot now be undertaken on the wanton grounds urged for their excuse during even the last few centuries; and when they are undertaken there is now at least the semblance, and I believe the reality, of searching for every expedient which may alleviate the cruelty of the result. The respect for human life, as the life of a man redeemed, as the life of one not beyond the reach of the Spirit of Christ, is increasingly felt by the families and governments of every state in Europe; assuredly it is the case amongst ourselves. I will attempt no further detail lest I weary you. While I have been speaking, the daily scenes with which you are familiar, the recollection

of the importunity with which you are assailed for the aid of your purse, or for the aid of your thoughts and of your personal exertion in the cause of Christ, forbid you to despair that the Christian faith is either stagnant or effete.

But then its progress is slow,—that I grant; it seems to us as very slow. But we are apt to judge from the narrow sphere of our own observation, and because we are ourselves conscious of little more than tossings and upheavings of the waters around us, it by no means follows that the great tide-wave of Christianity is not on the advance. Surely the tide is stationary when the waters are free from swell. But would you desire, would you ask for a miracle? Then I know of no promise or prophecy or analogy which could warrant the expectation or the prayer. The Christian faith claims to be a holy scheme of wisdom and love originating with God. If so, then in the slowness of its progress it resembles, as we have seen, God's other prearrangements in the creation of the world and in the development of the intellectual creations of mankind. You remember how the old Roman general received the thanks of his countrymen because in the hour of their low estate he did not despair of the safety of the commonwealth; depend upon it, it is no sign of a Christian loyalty to despair of the progress of the Church of God. Depend upon it the prophecy of Isaiah will be fulfilled, and the Earth



one day will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, although unto the Lord that one day is as a thousand years.

This consideration of the successive and distant intervals at which it has pleased the Eternal Father to communicate successive revelations of His will,—revelations, be it remembered, always increasing in clearness and in extent, and always adapted to the capacities of the recipients,—furnishes, I think, some clue to the manner in which we may properly interpret the scope of the revelations themselves. It was to this point I briefly referred in my first discourse, and the present is, I think, the proper place for a further explanation.

If you will reflect upon the general nature of the Mosaic Dispensation, you will, I think, come to the conclusion that it was adapted, wisely and divinely adapted, to a somewhat rude and preparatory stage of civilization. The allowance of polygamy, the judicial provision of facilities for divorce, the tacit permission of slavery, the enactment of a law of exact retaliation; the institution of a vast burden of ceremonial rites through which alone God could be approached, the erection of the thick, double, significant veil which as yet separated the visions of the sanctuary from the eyes of the people, the enactment of a Sabbath which, in its first positive enrolment in law, implied simply a day of enforced cessation from all employment;



I say, all these divine arrangements, viewed in the brighter Gospel light which God has permitted to dawn after the experience of three thousand years, indicate the comparatively low social and moral condition of the people for whom such enactments were necessary to raise them to a higher and holier life. I stop not now to enquire what was the contemporaneous sad condition of the heathen world. This law was holy and honourable and perfect for the purposes for which it was enacted; nevertheless, in the very process of completing its intended work upon the hearts and consciences of the people, it was preparing the way for the future adoption of some higher and more spiritual and more holy code. It contained within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. Much of this Law Christ annulled, partly by fulfilling its typical significance and partly by enacting those final and more spiritual sanctions for which the Mosaic Law was the preparation and the guide. ‘Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.’ This is the sample of the way in which Christ introduces the brighter and the eternal light.

Thus it is, I think, observable that God under the old law was gradually leading His people into ‘The Truth’ through the medium of truth which was rather relative than absolute. Respect was had

to the capacity of the recipients ; many enactments bore a reference to what Christ Himself calls the 'hardness' of the hearts of the people. Moses repeatedly applies to them the strong but expressive metaphor, 'a stiff-necked people.' St Paul expressly told the Athenians there had been a moral ignorance at which in His infinite wisdom 'God winked.' Nor must we forget the language of the Divine Saviour Himself when it is written of Him, as in one of our texts, 'He spake the word unto them as they were able to hear it,' and again He says, 'I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.'

Thus far then in relation to the nature and scope of the divine truth contained in the Revelation itself ; and now a word or two regarding the mode or the instrument whereby that truth is communicated or revealed. Throughout the material world thoughtful men have discerned the application of a 'principle of least action.' No forces are introduced which are either unnecessary or do not produce their full effects. As there is no haste, so also there is no waste in Nature. There is a stately reserve, a kingly dignity, as the Creator passes along the realms of His creation. Analogy would lead us to enquire with reverence whether a similar *economy of action* is not also observable whenever it has been the Divine will to reveal truth to man. In reply, we find that the Divine interposition, so far

as we can trace it, is exerted just up to, and not beyond, the necessities of the case. Just as it was human hands which removed the stone from the grave of Lazarus, just as it was human hands which loosened the sad drapery<sup>1</sup> of death, so in like manner it seems to me that God has not been pleased by any direct interposition to reveal truths to man which were within the reach of his capacity to discover for himself.

God has given to man a piercing intellect which reaches to the heights above and penetrates to the depths beneath; He has endowed him with an imagination which brings all rich and varied phantasies before his contemplation; He has bestowed upon him a judgment which reduces these ideal flittings into order and logical combination; to these gifts He has superadded the understanding, which comprehends the interadaptations of things; and for all these faculties God will bring, and daily does bring, the man who has received them into judgment. I know full well that no Astronomer could have predicted the apparition of the Star of Bethlehem; I know full well that no physiologist could have detected within the human tissues the story of eternal life; I know that no moralist could have preconceived the sad glories which stream from the Cross on Calvary; nevertheless there are lower and human truths within the

<sup>1</sup> For another possible instance see *The Parable of the Grave-clothes* by Mr Beard. Deighton, Bell, and Co.

scope of the natural faculties of man; and depend upon it He who pre-arranged these faculties, and pre-ordained the limits of their domain, will not in weakness or in impatience supersede them.

Now apply these two principles, namely, first, the Law of Adaptation to the capacity of the recipient, or, as you may call it, the *Law of Relativity*; and secondly, the *Law of Economy of Action*;—I say apply these two principles calmly and without prejudice or prepossession to the interpretation of some portions of the most ancient Scriptures, and then ask yourselves whether these earliest divine revelations of truth stand to yourselves, now living in the nineteenth century of the Christian Dispensation, in any closer relation than do the relative truths of the Mosaic economy. I will say no more; and what I have said herein I presume to be nothing more than the suggestion of, I hope, a thoughtful and a reverential mind, proposed for the consideration of the great Doctors of the Christian Church. He who from his heart and from a well-instructed mind regards the earliest revelations as intended for *absolute* truth to be literally received by all men in all ages, ‘to God he regardeth them’ as absolute truth, and ‘he giveth God thanks:’ he who regardeth them as *relative* truths intended for the godly edification of a rude age and within its capacity to hear, ‘to God he regardeth them’ as relative truth, and he too ‘giveth God thanks.’ ‘Let every man be fully per-

suaded in his own mind;' and happy is he who condemneth not himself in the thing that he regardeth.

Gladly from these thorny heights we descend to the green pastures and the still waters where God restoreth the souls of His children.

In the discourse of last Sunday I spoke of the pleasure, the joy of life which accompanies the successful exercise of the intellectual powers: a pre-ordained beneficent arrangement whereby man is impelled and encouraged to seek for and accumulate the knowledge of God in His works, and at the same time to intensify and strengthen the life of the powers themselves. I noticed it as analogous to that instinct whereby, in the ages that are gone, God's lower creatures, in the maintenance and joy of life, were impelled to perform their appointed functions in the arrangement of the earth for the service of man. This analogy we shall find is again repeated in the constitution and the exercise of our moral faculties.

For the great object of the Gospel, as expressed by St Peter in the fewest words, is 'to bring us to God;' to build up the human character into the image of Christ. Now the natural constitution of man is such that he is ever feeling after God if haply he may find Him. So said the great Apostle, to the Athenian philosophers, standing on that hill where their great teachers had stood cen-



turies before, musing on that same thing. No man, with this craving, this feeling after God within him, can have peace in his heart, until God is found : and there, my brethren, there lies the secret clue to very much, if not to all, of the weariness, the uneasiness, the dissatisfaction, the ill temper in the world. These all originate in the ceaseless craving, the angry gnawing of a moral appetite, or passion, or affection, call it which you please, while its proper object remains half unknown, half unsought, and wholly unattained. When that one and only object of the inevitable, irrepressible affection is reached, then there is peace—‘the peace of God.’ ‘Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’ The Christian is then come, and not till then, to his true self, to his true life ; for thus I read ; ‘this is eternal life, to know the true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.’

Every true step that the Christian henceforth takes is associated with joy. I am not saying that there is no feeling of deep compunction for the days of grace which have been lost, or for the sin which drew, and which always draws, that thick veil between God and his heart ; but I am saying that when God has been found by the sinner as his Father, to whom in Christ Jesus he is reconciled ; when the tenderness, the forbearance, the loving-kindness of God his Father, as manifested in the person of Christ, have been revealed to his spirit,



then his life becomes a life of liberty and joy. Not that henceforth he is freed from the discipline of sorrow ; far, very far from that ; but when sorrow comes to him, he knows the wise and loving will which has ordained it, and then the sorrow also turns to his salvation, in the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

Thus the Christian's life, growing in grace and in the knowledge of God, proceeds in joy ; the light of his life again diffusing other light and other joy around him ; for men see his good works, and they cannot ignore their heavenly source. In this way the Church of God is built up by slow, but secure degrees, in the midst of a peace which passeth all understanding, in the diffusion of a joy which is inexpressible and full of glory.

Am I, perchance, speaking to one brother who wonders what I mean ? if so, let him in simplicity of spirit study the record of the experience of St Paul ; 'and God will reveal even this to him.'

But in conclusion, what is to be the final issue of all this stately divine plan, thus progressive in the midst of life and the pleasure of existence ?—'King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ?'—that was the question once put in an hour, the memory and the thrill of which are still undiminished after the lapse of nearly 2000 years. That question will be put again and again in various forms. The reply at this moment is, I believe, that the earth will

indeed be one day 'full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,' and that men will then neither 'hurt nor destroy in all God's Holy Mountain.'

Towards the end of the last century there was an accomplished philosopher in a neighbouring country who in the highest posts of literary office had served it well, and had encouraged and advanced the various branches of the learning of the times. These were days of the public denial of God, and hence upon the men of those days there came the inevitable Nemesis of violence and riot. The man of whom I speak, and of whom his country was not worthy, was proscribed and fled into concealment.

In a solitary chamber with one only friend to visit him, this remarkable man after many months of seclusion, without access to a single book, sat down to the task of writing the progress of the human mind from the dawn of history: that work accomplished, he began to record his hopes and conceptions of its future destiny. He was a man of great practical experience and endued with a genius well tutored by adversity: would that I could say that he accepted the Christian Faith even in the mutilated form in which they who said they had the keys of knowledge presented it to his mind.

Condorcet lived in this lonely chamber, thus, alas! unilluminated by the Christian's hope, just long enough to complete the outline of his great work,

and then he was compelled to fly, and to perish with a miserable death in the midst of his flight :

deserted in his utmost need  
By those his former bounty fed.

Now what think you was the conclusion to which this accomplished solitary man arrived regarding the hope of the spread of goodness and knowledge among mankind? He concluded that an amount of knowledge, and a force of genius, and a perfection of virtue, quite inconceivable to ourselves at present, would one day in the far vista of time certainly prevail throughout the nations of a densely populated world. Change these words into the 'knowledge of the Lord,' and they approximate to the prophecy of Isaiah. Did Condorcet unconsciously see the shadows of the angels' wings who are sent from the throne of God for its accomplishment?

Accomplished that prophecy must be, but not by the means which the Philosopher conceived. 'Not by power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.' So to this end the Divine Lord of His Church sends to one man the gift of suggestion, to another the gift of combination, by the same spirit; to one man He sends the genius of quick intuition, to another the genius of patient investigation, by the same spirit; to one man is given by the spirit, the word of wisdom, to another faith, to another prophecy, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in

the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Till THE EARTH SHALL BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA.

If, by thy decree,  
 The consummation that will come by stealth  
 Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,  
 Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away  
 The sting of human nature. Spread the law,  
 As it is written in thy holy book,  
 Throughout all lands; let every nation hear  
 The high behest, and every heart obey;  
 [Both for the love of purity, and hope  
 Which it affords, to such as do thy will  
 And persevere in good, that they shall rise  
 To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.]  
 —Father of good! this prayer in bounty grant,  
 In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.  
 Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,  
 And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,  
 The guide appointed, and the ransom paid.

WORDSWORTH, *Excursion*, Bk. IX.



CONTINUITY OF THE SCHEMES OF NATURE  
AND OF REVELATION.

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A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION  
AT NOTTINGHAM IN 1866.



Χρὴ μὲν τοί γε τὸν ἅπαξ παραδεξάμενον τοῦ κτίσαντος τὸν κόσμον εἶναι ταύτας τὰς γραφὰς πεπεῖσθαι, ὅτι ὅσα περὶ τῆς κτίσεως ἀπαντὰ τοῖς ζητοῦσι τὸν περὶ αὐτῆς λόγον, ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν γραφῶν.—ORIGEN, *Philocal.*

ΣΩ. Ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἐστι περιμένειν ἕως ἄν τις μάθῃ ὡς δεῖ πρὸς θεοὺς καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακεῖσθαι.

ΑΛ. Πότε οὖν παρέσται ὁ χρόνος οὗτος, ᾧ Σώκρατες; καὶ τίς ὁ παιδεύσων; . . . . ΣΩ. Οὗτός ἐστιν ᾧ μέλει περὶ σοῦ.—PLATO, *Alcib. II.* . . . . *Phædo*, § 60, 61. . . . *Republic*, § 427.

## SERMON I.

### CONTINUITY OF THE SCHEMES OF NATURE AND OF REVELATION.

ECCLES. III. 14, 15.

*I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever ;  
nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it : and  
God doeth it, that men should fear before Him. That  
which hath been is now ; and that which is to be hath  
already been.*

THESE words would be sufficiently striking even if they were the language of an ordinary man. Coming from a man pre-eminent for wisdom, and opportunity, and experience, from one whose mind moreover was illuminated by the inspiration of God, our text assumes an aspect of more than common importance.

It is possible, indeed, that to some of my hearers our text may suggest unwelcome thoughts of the fixedness of human individual destiny : you may imagine for a moment that Solomon therein describes man as entangled in the meshes of an iron necessity which he cannot evade ; man, not so much the sport, as the victim of his circumstances ; man, as playing in his little day his predestined

part, just as other men in their generations before him played their own—for is it not said by the Royal Preacher, “I know that what God doeth he doeth it for ever; that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been”? But I hope to speak to you to-night of an interpretation of these remarkable words truer, and deeper, and more hopeful. True, I shall have to speak to you of permanent, inevitable laws imposed by the Omnipotent Creator upon the very constitution of His creature’s being, and on all the various circumstances which surround him or affect him: but then these laws are devised in consummate wisdom, and are executed in unswerving love; these laws of our moral, our spiritual being, are to us the expressions of a holy Father’s will, they are the explanations of the scheme of His righteous government; they are to us, and within the limits of our mental powers, the unfolding of the plan on which the creation of mind, and spirit, and matter, was devised and is still sustained.

So far from forging the links of an iron necessity for the thralldom of man, the permanence and invariability of these laws secure the charter of man’s liberty of action, they constitute him a responsible creature, they lie at the foundation of his dearest hopes. It is alone because these laws of nature and of being are permanent, that man is enabled to foresee the consequence of his doings;

it is on the security of this ground that he acts with foresight and with confidence, forming and persevering in his plans in the fulness of hope. Nay, your Town is at this time thronged with a concourse of thoughtful and sagacious men, not solely for the interchange of kindly greetings, but to aid and encourage each other in the search for truths which they know are ordained of God, for purposes beyond those of to-day or of to-morrow, and concerning which they know that, "Whatsoever God doeth, He doeth it *for ever*; nothing can be put to it or taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear Him."

What I want to show you, or to bring to your remembrance to-night, is this;—I want to convince you, if you need the conviction, that those great cardinal facts, or doctrines as we call them, of the Christian faith, which are made known to us by revelation from God, are analogous to, or I might even say are extensions of, those other ordinary facts or principles, by the application of which it is ordained of God that you and I live our hourly life, and that human society coheres day by day. I do not, indeed, mean to say that, by any stretch of thought, the unaided mind of man could have devised or have conceived a scheme so mighty as that of the redemption of the great human family (for instance) through the agency of a crucified Redeemer; I do not mean to say that man,

of himself and out of himself alone, could have originated the thought of salvation from the consequences and from the power of sin, by faith in that Redeemer. But I do mean to say, that so soon as these cardinal facts of the Christian faith have been taught us, on examination we find they are all of a piece, and all in consistency with those other wise and beneficent arrangements, which we discern in the world around us and within us. Herein, I say, are verified the words of our text, "That which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been."

Brethren, I need scarcely say that a subject such as this will require and deserve all your attention, and will demand more than all my care; do you therefore pray, and let me pray to the Divine Spirit of Grace, that He may

"What in us is dark, illumine;  
What is low, raise and support."

I purpose then, under this point of view, to consider,

I. The Redemption of mankind by a suffering Redeemer.

II. The Salvation of man from sin, and from its consequences, by faith in that Redeemer.

III. The Sanctification of man's character, *i. e.* the development of his moral being in righteousness, by the operation of the Divine Spirit, and through prayer.

And my aim, as I have said, will be to show you that these cardinal facts or chief doctrines of revelation, are majestic instances of that same sort of CONTINUITY of the Divine plan in the moral and spiritual world, which we have in this town so lately and so ably been taught to observe in the universe of matter. All these several arrangements, I say, are but consistent and CONTINUOUS parts of one Divine magnificent plan, ordained of old by the Eternal Father; "nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath been already."

I. And first, as touching Redemption by a suffering Redeemer.

Society, the whole fabric of the moral world, is carried on, and is held together by a law, by a scheme of natural intervention or mediation; I think you could scarcely name a joy you have ever felt, or a trouble from which you have ever escaped, which you cannot trace to the intervention of another, and not rarely to an intervention effected with pain to the intervener.

Think of the little babe;—there it lies, joyous and redolent with the promise of the activities of life, yet utterly helpless and dependent upon others' care. But think also of the pale face of her whose strength scarce suffices to nestle her little one in her nerveless arms. Nay, without my bidding, some of you perforce recall to memory, how the mother's



pulse ceased to beat before she could utter a parent's blessing on her child. And what is all this? what is it but the redemption of a life, at the cost of the sufferings of another?

Pass onwards a few years, and trace that child now walking with elastic step at his father's side—but look upwards at the father's face; you will not be surprised to find many a deep furrow there, furrows that bear testimony to the father's anxieties and the father's toils—anxieties and toils, that the bright boy who walks at his side may have a good offset for the battle of life before him,—nay, anxieties and toils sometimes deep and inevitable for the bare supply of that child's daily bread. And what means all this? What is it but redemption again, sometimes procured at the cost of labour, and suffering, and tears?

And when is it that you cease to hear men speak of their “friends”? What other word so common among us? Need I remind you what that word “friend” practically implies? Alas! for the most part it implies, *not* the confiding interchange of thought; *not* the sweet comparison of experience, and of hope, and of aspiration; *not* the pleasant suggestions which arise from community of taste; for such high privileges are reserved for those only who by patient continuance in well-doing have acquired the right and the capacity to enjoy them: but that commonest of words, a “friend,” bears testi-

mony to that commonness of weakness which looks for aid in another's strength; to that commonness of wants which seek their supply in another's abundance; it bears testimony to that commonness of troubles which not rarely can be removed solely at the cost of another's pains, even greater than those which they assuage. There is not, there cannot be, a man before me, who may not trace, again and again, instances of what I mean in his own personal history. "I speak of what we know and feel within."

And think again, for a moment, even of the arts and conveniences of life; of the appliances, the inventions, the discoveries which God hath ordained to ennoble life: such results come at no man's light bidding; the discovery, the invention may come, and in fact must come at last, like a flash, but the happy, the final thought comes to the man of genius only after days, and nights, or even years of patient endurance in intellectual toil. And when it does come to him, not seldom the health is failing, or the lamp of life is flickering and burnt low; or other men step in, reaping the harvest of his toil, and leaving him little more than the gleanings of the field, the sowing whereof was all his own. Look at the countenances of the chiefs among those able men who now throng your town, and on their brows you will find many a trace of the midnight struggle with thought, ageing them before they have reached

their prime. Herein is that saying true, “one soweth, and another reapeth.” These men labour—you and I “enter into their labours.”

And so I might proceed with other instances of a like import. If the time allowed, I might more than briefly allude to the well-known names of noble men and of noble women still living among us, who, like apostles and martyrs of old, count not their lives dear unto them, if only they may help the helpless, cheer the cheerless, raise the fallen, and impart the joy of hope to the spirit of the dying. But I forbear; for one continuous system of redemption and of vicarious suffering has been ordained of God as the very law and the plan of our natural being.

Now, such being the scheme, such the manner after which it has pleased the Eternal Creator to impart the joys, to assuage the sorrows, and to enlighten the ignorance, of His creatures in this their natural life, which endures but for threescore years and ten; I ask you, Is there anything which can reasonably jar upon our feelings if we find that the Eternal Father in His marvellous beneficence has interposed after a like, though *a higher manner*, on behalf of His children in those higher relations of theirs which endure for ever? For without this interposition, what can man learn by his natural faculties of the life to come? Without this interposition, what can he ascertain by his natural faculties of the world of spirit? Does God really care for man

with an individual, with a personal care? Will God hear his prayer? Did He intend him to pray? Can there be any sympathy between a pure Almighty God and a sinful man, conscious of the wilfulness of his sin? Is it possible for such a man to be at one with such a God?

To these anxious questions the wisest men of ancient times admitted that of themselves they could give no reply. Yet, strange to say, Socrates, confessedly the wisest of them all, more than once, and as it were with the voice of prophecy, expressed his strong conviction, that the God who, he said, manifestly '*cared*' for man, would one day *send him a teacher to instruct him*. What wonder, then, if in the fulness of time God should take compassion on the lost, and ignorant, and pitiable condition of His children, and, through the mediation of Christ and His matchless example, teach the world what a good man should be, and what a good man may be? What wonder, moreover, if God, through the mediation of His Divine Son, should thus give to man a distinct and *living manifestation* of all that a finite being need know, or can know, of the infinite God-head? And further still, what wonder if this interposition, this mediation thus made by the Son of God on man's behalf, should be accompanied by the suffering and the death of the incarnate Redeemer? Would it not be all of a piece, would it not be in harmony, in CONTINUITY with those other

numberless interventions in man's behalf, which by God's natural appointment we see every day involve the sufferings of the intervener?

But more still remains. Man is not only confessedly pitiable and ignorant, but he is, and he knows he is, both sinful and a wilful sinner against God. What shall—what can put away such sin? What can make an atonement, a reconciliation between this sinning creature and this all-pure but offended God? The Revelation of God's will to us in the Gospel of His Son tells us it is the Life and the Cross of the Redeemer Christ. If you ask me why, or how such things can be, I cannot tell you; at least, by no means fully so. But then, in the natural world, I cannot tell you what, in their subtle essence, are those mysterious agencies called light, or heat, or electricity, or magnetism, or gravitation. Of some of their relations, and of some portion of the laws under which they are ordained to act, men of genius, after the patience and the failures of ages, have at length caught a glimpse, and of these they have taken ample advantage in the appliances of life. But what these agencies are *in themselves*, who can tell? Neither in the natural world do I know why “like produces like,” nor do I know why the worlds, and the creatures which our world contains, are constrained to abide the slow process of their growth, and start not at once into the fulness of their being, like Minerva in her panoply. And if again I turn to the moral



world, I cannot tell you why a righteous Creator permitted sin to defile the beautiful world which He created. I cannot tell you why a loving and wise Father permitted sorrow, and ignorance, and wrong, to be the lot of all His children ; but as I see that in the natural world He has provided the mediation and suffering of one man to remove the suffering or the ignorance of another ; why should I cavil at a revelation which tells me that man may be pardoned and reconciled to God, through the humiliation, the life, the example, the death, the vicarious sufferings of His incarnate Son ? These things angels may well desire to look into. Like the Great Ordainer of all things,

“They are higher than heaven, what can I do ?

They are deeper than hell, what can I know ?”

So I will bow my head, and I will place myself at the foot of the Saviour’s Cross. I will wonder and adore, and I will stay my mind on God. All that I know is, that the law of Divine Redemption is in harmony, in CONTINUITY with God’s other dispensations, and I see that herein “whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever. I know that what hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been.”

II. We now come to the great Christian scheme of salvation by FAITH in Christ Jesus. Many are the attributes which in the Gospel are assigned to faith. By faith the Christian is said to stand ; by faith he



walks; by faith he is made pure; by faith he removes mountains; by faith he overcomes all things; by faith he lives, he is justified, and he is saved. But if these attributes assigned to Faith are great, so also are the cavils with which men in all ages have been disposed to admit her claims, and many and grievous are the charges which they have laid at her door. For is it practically found, men have asked—and they have the right to ask it—is it in accordance with experience, that men lead holy lives in proportion to the strength of their religious convictions, and to the purity and perfection of the creeds which they profess? The devils have their convictions, yet the devils tremble and are impure. What, then, is the true source of these apparent contradictions? It lies mainly, I think, in a mistake as to the meaning of the term FAITH itself. Let us try then to ascertain what this much-vaunted, much-misunderstood principle really is. And here I observe, that if there is any one English expression which will fully render the meaning of the Hebrew original, it is *trustfulness* of spirit: the word actually adopted in the Authorized Version is '*trust*'; and if I were to recount to you all the achievements attributed in the Old Testament to *trust* in Jehovah, I should have to repeat to you a large portion of the Old Testament itself; and you would soon perceive how the results of this *trust* in Israel's God, as there revealed, are very

much the same as those assigned in the New Testament to faith in God. Assigned, be it carefully observed, no longer to faith in God simply as the Creator and Governor of the world, or even as the Covenant-God of the nation, but to faith in God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, reconciled to His redeemed children under the new and better Covenant of the Gospel.

So far, then, we may even here observe a CONTINUITY in the principles of God's dispensations to His creatures, as exhibited to the men of old time, and to us Christians in these latter days. But I wish to go further, and I wish to show you how this same principle of faith, or trustfulness, is the very key-stone of the arch of our social fabric, the very strength of our daily natural lives.

I observe then, that as in the illustration of the principle of vicarious suffering, which runs through the world of nature, we took the mother's pitiable condition at the birth of her child, so here, in illustration of the continuity of faith, we shall take the instance of the young child itself. For the first years of its existence its whole life is of necessity a life of dependence and trust. In faith it seeks its natural food; in faith it nestles itself in its mother's breast; in faith it strives to stand; in faith it lisps the fond names of father, and of mother; and, blessed be God, in this Christian land in faith it sits upon its mother's lap, and with stam-

mering lips learns to call upon the name of Jesus. As years advance the young child walks at his father's side, and, gazing in his father's face with unquestioning faith, learns from him and applies the first lessons of the life before him. Thus the young child, by the natural ordinance of God, is reared and nurtured as it were in a cradle of faith, and if not too indocile he soon becomes a fitting emblem (and the illustration here is not mine, you will see)—he becomes an emblem of those children of an elder growth, who live the life of the true citizens of the kingdom of God.

But these early lessons of faith stop not here. In faith and patience he painfully learns the arts of maturer life. In faith he ploughs; in faith he sows; in faith he gathers into barns; in faith he launches into the deep; in faith he borrows; in faith he lends; in faith he carries on his commerce with his brother man, often and of necessity confiding to his care the very means for which he looks for his daily bread. Need you any further illustration of what faith is, and what faith achieves? Think for a moment of that wonderful thread which now, by God's good pleasure, unites and associates two distant continents. It was FAITH that laid that wire, overcoming the elements, scaling the subaqueous mountains, and spanning the unknown caverns which form the dark floor of the ocean. It was faith, I say, which for days and nights together, without one moment's intermis-

sion, kept the strong, untiring arm, and the fixed, watchful eye, upon the marvellous appliances, until they reached the haven where they would be, and had learnt that the mother of many nations had in the flash of a moment sent the greeting of love to her child in the far-off west. Meanwhile, strange to say, upon the shores of the East there were other and less harmonious sounds to be heard than those of the triumph of the victory of faith. These were the sounds of wailing: Germany weeping for her children because they were not; and among ourselves, thousands of hearts failing them for fear of the wreck of their substance<sup>1</sup>. And wherefore were these sounds of mourning, and whence came this fear? You may trace them to the *absence* of FAITH. Nations and men had lost their faith in each other, and the offspring of Distrust are War and Panic. Hand in hand and close by the side of FAITH, stands her sister HARMONY; when FAITH departs, CHAOS soon takes her place.

Thus you see, my brethren, that the faith in Jesus, the *loving*<sup>2</sup> *trust*, I mean, in a sympathizing, personal Saviour, whereby the Christian stands; the faith in Jesus whereby the sinner is purified, justified, and saved, is, after all, no new principle, but rather the old and abiding principle of trustfulness, which alone

<sup>1</sup> Through the American crisis.

<sup>2</sup> I have gladly adopted this word from Vice-Chancellor Sir W. P. Wood's volume, *On the Continuity of Scripture*. Murray, 1867.

gives cohesion to our natural life. It is the old principle indeed,—but the old principle greatly heightened, intensified, and sanctified by the Spirit of God. It is the golden chain which unites the visible world of flesh with the unseen world of spirit, assuring the child of nature that he is the redeemed child of God. Here then, again, and once more, we observe the CONTINUITY of the natural dispensations of God's providence with the spiritual dispensation of God's grace; and herein it is that we know that "what God doeth, He doeth it for ever,"—that which hath been is now, and that which is to be hath already been.

III. And now, had the time permitted, as I had hoped it would, I should have tried to show you how even the great doctrine of the sanctification of man's character by the Spirit of God, and acting for the most part through the medium of prayer, is again all of a piece, and in continuity with other eternal principles which God has impressed upon our natural being; but the subject<sup>1</sup> is too large a one for me at this late hour to draw upon your patience. Nevertheless, some few thoughts must be briefly expressed to you on the subject of PRAYER.

I need scarcely remind you that it is in and through prayer that the true, the advanced Christian lives. It is his soul's daily, hourly food. But, after

<sup>1</sup> This subject is virtually discussed in a second Sermon preached before the British Association in the following year at Dundee.

all, what is this prayer? Is there anything which at all resembles it and its effects in the world of flesh wherein we move? Prayer, in its deep reality and in its highest form, is the reverential intercourse of the Christian's spirit with the spiritual world: it is reverential communion with God,—communion with God (that is) as manifested in Christ Jesus. Now let me ask you, what takes place in the ways of a man's life, who lives much in the society of his friends? Does he not by intercourse catch their modes of thought? Does he not contract their habits, and imitate their manner of life? Does not his spirit become gradually moulded into theirs? And all this result arises from a great principle of *imitation*—a principle of imitation, which God for the wisest purpose has implanted in the nature of man. Just so,—only in a higher, and holier, and more reverential degree,—just so with the Christian through his true prayers and through communion with God. Just in proportion to the reality and frequency of this holy, spiritual intercourse, will be the gradual approximation of his own character to that of the ineffably perfect and Holy Being who, through the great name of Jesus, permits and encourages His redeemed children to approach Him. Hence it is that we read such words as “growth in grace,” and of the Christian being “built up into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Need you an example of what



I mean? Think for a moment of the Apostle John: in him, beyond all other men, shine conspicuously the qualities of gentleness and dignity and love; and were not these especially the characteristics of the one, perfect, matchless, Divine Man, who made the Apostle His companion, ever walking at his Master's side, leaning on His bosom as He sat at meat, and in the near companionship catching many a sacred undertone not heard by other hearts, but never ceasing to vibrate in his own.

And so it is, in his own measure and degree, with every Christian who really communes with God;—his character becomes gradually moulded into the character of Christ; and thus more and more nearly resembling Christ, he gradually becomes more amiable, more truthful, more self-restrained, more forgiving, more forbearing, more peaceful.

I say especially, more *peaceful*. For, mark you, what is the Law of Prayer enacted by its great Lord in the kingdom of God? It is “men ought always to pray, and not to faint;” it is “in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God:” nor must we forget, that He who is our example and “all our hope,” added to His prayer: “nevertheless, not my will, but THINE be done.” And then, mark you with especial care, what is the Law of the Promise attached to prayer. It is *not* that the bitter cup shall, in all cases, be put away;

it is *not* that the thorn in the flesh shall, in all cases, be removed; it is *not* that the precise petitions shall be as precisely granted; but, better far than this, the Law of the Promise is, that God, if need be, will give fortitude to drink the cup, strength to bear the cross, grace sufficient to endure the thorn. The Christian in his agony of spirit, often prays not alone unwisely for what would injure him, but sometimes he asks for what it is impossible to grant; nevertheless if only he asks *in faith*, even if he asks unwisely, or if he asks for the impossible, still his *true* prayer is truly granted; for after all, and whatever the words of his ignorance or of his passionate grief may be, *what his heart truly meant* was repose of mind, a restful, peaceful spirit. I say his *true* heart's prayer is granted, for beyond all, the Law of the Promise is, that the Christian shall rise from his knees *peaceful*; he shall become peaceful like the God of peace with whose Spirit he has held communion, and at whose footstool he has prayed. For thus I read as the very charter of the Gospel, "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the PEACE OF GOD, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds." "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God."

In the strength of this peace of God, Stephen, before the face of those who stoned him, fell asleep

in Jesus, praying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

In this peace, Paul and Silas, thrust in the prison with their feet made fast in the stocks, at midnight sang praises unto God.

In this peace, Polycarp bade the executioner leave him unbound at the stake, for that same God, in communion with whom he had lived, would nerve him, that he flinched not when he died.

In this peace, Boniface, the martyr and apostle of the Germans, before setting out on his last missionary journey, bravely but calmly thus gave his final instructions: "My son, place in the chest with my books a linen cloth, in which, should occasion arise, they may wrap my worn-out corpse."

In this peace, Luther stood before his enemies, and the enemies of truth, at the Diet of Worms, and, taking the Bible in his hands, exclaimed, "*By this I stand!*"

In this peace, Rowland Taylor, of Hadley, walked to the stake with head erect and hopeful eye, as a man would return to the home that he loved.

In this peace, Ridley looked forward with joy to the flames, and bade his sister come to his marriage.

In this peace, thousands upon thousands of God's children, far from the gaze and the applause of the crowd, have kept the even tenor of a Christian life, in prosperity without elation, in penury without

discontent, in bereavements without questionings, in suffering without repining, in revilings without reviling again.

These all lived in prayer and communion with God, and, like God, they became PEACEFUL; and after this law, so it may be with you and me, for “*I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before Him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been.*”



THE ANALOGY OF INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS  
TO RELIGIOUS GROWTH.

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A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION  
AT DUNDEE IN 1867.

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Θεὸς ἔδωκεν ἀντὶ δέλτου τὸν Κόσμον.—S. CHRYSOSTOM.

“La Nature est une image de la Grace.”—PASCAL.



TO HIS GRACE  
THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH AND QUEENSBERRY, K.G.,  
D.C.L., F.R.S., F.L.S.,  
PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR  
THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE,

*This Sermon is,*

WITH HIS GRACE'S PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED.

## SERMON II.

### *THE ANALOGY OF INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS TO RELIGIOUS GROWTH.*

LUKE XIX. 26.

*I say unto you, Unto every one that hath shall be given.*

TWELVE months ago, on an occasion and before an audience similar to this, I endeavoured to show that the main principles divinely implanted in man for the maintenance and discharge of his social relations, are of a like kind with those which in the Holy Scriptures are declared necessary to save him from the consequences and the power of sin, and restore him to the favour and the image of God.

In the Redemption of Mankind, for instance, by a suffering Redeemer, I trace the highest and the noblest form,—the divine climax in fact,—of that human, friendly help, which it is necessary for one man to extend to his brother; sometimes in order to place that brother in the station that becomes him, and at other times to save him from temporal ruin: and I observe, moreover, that this friendly, necessary help is *commonly* bestowed not without great difficulty and suffering and loss to the interposer

himself. The very constitution of society in fact is cemented and maintained by one grand scheme of Natural Mediation.

Faith, also, in a personal and ever-living Saviour, I showed was no new or mysterious principle unknown to the natural sympathies of man, but rather is the old and abiding principle of that trustfulness of one man in another, which alone gives cohesion to our daily life. It is the old principle indeed, but then the old principle of trustfulness in man is heightened and intensified and sanctified by the Spirit of God, redirected also and applied henceforth to Him who, though now the Christian “sees Him not, yet in whom believing he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

And, lastly, I endeavoured to show that the sanctification, the improvement of the moral character, the building up of the man within the heart, in the main through the agency of meditation and prayer, is a divine appointment, all of a piece and in continuity with that other appointment equally divine, whereby man, through an innate principle of imitation, becomes assimilated in his moral character to those who are the objects of his habitual association and constant thought.

Thus the *Laws*—and here lay the whole scope and tenour of the discourse—thus the Laws after which we see by experience God has fashioned man’s nature in relation to his social temporal life,

are in harmony and continuity with those other laws, by the operation of which Revelation declares it is God's good pleasure to fit his now sinful children, for their sinless, eternal inheritance in the society of the redeemed.

The scope of my remarks to-day will, in some sense, be the supplement, and form the conclusion, of that other discourse. For I shall endeavour to show you, or to remind you, that the processes which in the Bible are declared to accompany and to promote the Christian's growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ,—the processes, that is, which accompany the sanctification, the development of our moral nature,—are in strict analogy with those which we find accompany growth in the knowledge of the natural things around us. That is to say, I shall endeavour to show how the education of the religious principle as proposed and provided for in the Bible, is all of a piece with what experience teaches us regarding the education of the intellectual faculties. In other words, the processes by which the Bible tells us a man can alone become morally good, are pretty much the same as those by which, when applied to another part of his nature, he becomes intellectually great. Both combined render him in the language of the noblest of our poets, Dear to God, and famous to all ages. Now I cannot but think that the false and fatal prejudice, which, like the poisoned robe of Nessus, still clings

to the minds of some good men, viz. the suspicion that growth in human knowledge is unfriendly to the Christian's growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ,—I say this suspicion may be corrected or removed by the consideration of such analogies as these. For the existence of such analogies is sufficient to show that the means by which natural knowledge is to be acquired, have been as much the object of the Divine Pre-arrangement, as have been the means provided for our moral advancement.

To secure to man as much of the knowledge of the divine nature, and of the divine will, as his capacities admit, it has pleased God to give a Revelation contained in the pages of a Book. To secure to man the knowledge of material things, Chrysostom said long ago, with a prophetic sagacity, "God has given the UNIVERSE in *the place of a Book*." It is the duty of the Christian to read and to reverence each. On the other hand, Pascal spoke as a true philosopher when he said, "Nature after all is only another form of Grace." It is the wisdom of the natural philosopher neither to ignore nor neglect the analogy.

Thoughts of this kind at the present day can scarcely be out of place before any congregation of educated Christians, but they seem to me to be unavoidably suggested by the circumstances under which we meet. For in the assemblage of gifted

men who now throng your city, you will find those who represent the fairest and the noblest forms of human genius. Some you will find who, by penetrating intellect, have taught us how all the glittering hosts of the starry canopy are linked in a bond of material brotherhood with one little globe which they encircle. These men have constrained the sun himself to solve the enigma of his mysterious fires by which from the beginning he has been ordained of God to arrange and uphold all terrestrial things. And at length with patient importunity the same men have compelled the moon to reveal the secrets of her devious course.

Others of them have delved into the solid earth, and there they have learned the wondrous story, how, age after age, and through myriads of ages, that earth has been clothed by a loving Creator in orderliness and beauty, the creatures of His bountiful hands "taking their pastime therein," and disporting themselves each after the joy of his kind: and when successive generations of this lavish beauty, and this joy of life have passed away, when these all have done their appointed office, when all is prepared for man and very good, then and not till then there came forth the fiat of God: "Let us make man in our own image," and "in the image of God created He him."

Others of these gifted men consume the silent hours, probing the depths of thought, and searching



how to number, or to measure, or to weigh, or to compute the interactions of all things inorganic, from an atom to a sun.

And lastly, others among them, by an intuition incommunicable, seize upon the products and evolutions of the thoughts of other men, and by a strange alchemy, transform them to the arts and practical appliances of life. It is these men who have taught us how to baffle the winds, and the waves, and the tides, and have associated the remotest families of the earth by the winged message of a moment. Surely these are thoughts, my brethren, not unbecoming to the Christian pulpit. For these men have not spoken from the impulse of their own minds alone, but have been ordained of God to be the intellectual seers, and prophets, and priests, and interpreters, of the wonderful works of His powerful hands. I say, moreover, that it is by such achievements of thought that the aspirations and pursuits of thousands of other men, less gifted than themselves, are raised above the blinding dust and the poisonous mists which beset the earth, and are carried away from the whirl of the mill, from the clang of the hammer, from the busy, anxious murmur of the Exchange, to the contemplation of the handiwork and the glory of Him, in whom we live and move and have our being.

But then the Christian philosopher knows full well, and the Christian minister must never forget to impress it upon his flock, that man cannot live in

the light and by the force of the intellect alone. Within the human heart there broods an ever-busy array of appetites, passions, and affections; and upon these the Bible declares, and experience confirms the declaration, that there is impressed by nature and inheritance, a wrong and a very sinful bias: Conscience, indeed, sits among these appetites, passions, and affections, as a judge upon his throne, and, bidden or unbidden, pronounces, as with the voice of God, her ceaseless verdicts; but conscience has lost her power to enforce her authority. The words of St Paul here find an echo from every man's heart: "The good that I would, that I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do." Who of us has not felt it a thousand times, for I speak of what we know and feel within. Who, then, or what shall rectify this evil bias? what shall sanctify the aims and objects of these emotions of the soul? Who or what shall restore to conscience the kingly authority which is his right? It is not in man, nor in man's philosophy—that has been tried beyond 2000 years, from Plato of ancient times to Comte of this present day—that philosophy has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The intellect may be able, with great eloquence, to assert the *right*, but the intellect alone is utterly powerless to restore the *might*, of conscience.

Now that which the powers of intellect and philosophy have failed to do, the Gospel of Christ

Jesus undertakes to effect: it promises to sanctify the heart of him who in his heart accepts the message; it proposes to give power as well as right to the conscience, it undertakes to set the man at peace with God and with himself. Physical knowledge has made many of the men among us useful and great: it is the power of God, as revealed in the Gospel of His Son, which alone can make all of us happy and good.

It is here that the analogy I spoke of comes in—the analogy, that is, between the processes whereby a man becomes intellectually great, and those processes whereby he becomes morally good; of course I use the terms good and great in a sense that is relative, and consistently with that lowliness and consciousness of imperfection which become alike the philosopher and the Christian. The life of each of them, moral and intellectual, is a progress and a growth; each proceeds step by step, and every step is an illustration of the text, “To him that hath shall be given:” assuredly this is the law of the kingdom of mind, and on two separate occasions it was proclaimed by its Divine Founder as the law of the Kingdom of Grace.

For mark the commencement of the life of each; compare, that is, the first conscious introduction of the man into the kingdom of grace, with the first introduction of the scholar into the fields of the knowledge of the physical creation. In the Holy

Scriptures the man is said, in most expressive language, *to be born again*; the old man is said to be put off, the new man is put on; he who enters the kingdom must first become as a little child.

Think, then, of the young child when his consciousness first fully dawns upon him:—mark his intense curiosity; how he must needs taste, and touch, and handle all things; observe his ceaseless activity, and the joyousness which sometimes seems to overspread his very existence; look at his first ineffectual attempts to run or to walk; note the errors of judgment into which he falls as to the dimensions and the distances of things; observe the wonder and the trustfulness with which he listens to those whom he loves, and his early docility towards those whom he trusts.

And now, having traced this picture in your minds, let me ask you, have I been in reality describing the feelings and early progress of the Christian when he first realizes the conviction that he is a redeemed child of God? or, have I been portraying the earlier days of a man's pupilage in the knowledge of the works of the Divine Creator? If heart answers to heart, I am quite sure that many a Christian man, and many a Christian woman, who listens to these words, can recall to memory his own childhood in grace—a first conscious entrance into a filial relationship to God the Father, through the pardon and acceptance which come through Christ

Jesus,—the very elements of which consisted of a childlike activity, and curiosity, and joyousness, and wonder, and trustfulness, and love; and least of all were wanting the errors of incipient Christian judgment.

The same language also applies equally well to the true scholar on his first introduction to the School of Science; there is the same intense curiosity, and activity, and joyousness.

There is the same type of childhood's unbounded hope and inevitable error.

Truth, however, here leads me to notice for a moment an apparent exception to this analogy. For there are some highly favoured Christians the language of whose spirits, by the force, it may be, of holy example, or of early education, from their childhood has been that of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Like Timothy, some Lois or Eunice instilled into their dawning minds the knowledge and the love of God. In such instances, perhaps as rare as they are certainly blessed, there is no recollection of the first fervour of a new affection, but there remain the quiet habits of a pious life, which, though in truth the work of the Divine Spirit, have seemed to them to be a portion of their nature. But even here the exception to the analogy is rather apparent than real; for there are like instances where from favourable circumstances, the young child has been introduced to the know-



ledge of the natural world about him almost with the dawn of his consciousness; and the growth of this love of natural knowledge has thus become, to *himself* at least, unobserved and inevitable.

But then this fervour of the new affection in due time subsides; its purpose was to animate the Christian with courage to combat with the early difficulties which he soon has to encounter, before experience has provided him with all the weapons of his warfare, and has fully convinced him that the victory must be his. If the feeling of this fervour continued in its first intensity, it would soon become a weakness rather than a strength, for the Christian might then be lost in the contemplation of his own emotions.

But now proceed onwards a step, and compare the moral discipline in the world of faith, with the intellectual trials which supervene upon the earlier introduction to the world of science. The earliest discipline through which the Christian is carried, in general, is the discipline of Patience, for his progress in the new, the divine, life before him he soon finds is far slower than he expected; and many are the temptations, the seductions, which assail him, and, in general, many are the moral falls from that pattern of perfect holiness which in the Gospel is set for his imitation. It is not long, also, before he feels the painful isolation from many of his old friends, who cannot understand



what it is which so strangely absorbs him, and who would fain persuade him that his new life is unreasonable and profitless. It is now, indeed, that his first and his chief trials have commenced; but if he obediently follow the Divine Hand which both points the way and confers the strength, then patience will have her perfect work; and patience worketh experience, and experience hope; and it is by hope, which is only another form of faith,—it is by hope that the Christian is anchored to the Rock.

Now, I say, that very few of the words which thus rapidly describe the progress of the Christian in this the second stage of the development of his moral being, need be changed to describe the progress of the true scholar, when he has made his first advance in the school of natural knowledge. He finds the same need and discipline of patience, the same slowness of progress; he falls into similar errors, from whence he must painfully and manfully emerge; he not seldom excites the same pity in those who call themselves his friends. In him also patience must have her perfect work, otherwise to him there will come no experience, and his hope will then make him ashamed.

So the life of the true student in the kingdom of nature is thus far in analogy and correlative with the life of the true disciple in the kingdom of grace: each is a progress and a growth; each step therein is a necessary preparation for the next; and in each

is abundantly verified that cardinal law, written alike on the pages of nature and of grace,—“To him that hath shall be given.”

You will observe that I have been speaking of the true, the sincere disciples alone, whether in the School of Grace or in the School of Nature. For, as there are many who, having received the seed of the divine life, allow it to be choked by the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches; or, being led away by the lust of the eyes, or the lusts of the flesh, or the pride of life, bring no fruit to perfection;—so there are many who linger merely on the threshold of the School of Knowledge; pleased or amused, now and then, with the sound of the glories that are discussed therein, but unwilling to submit to that discipline without which progress is impossible. Such persons can but little understand the burning of that early fervour of which I spoke as the type of the first stage of the Christian life, and still less can form a notion of the discipline of patience which leads through experience to that assurance of hope, which is the type of the second.

But now come we to those gifted favoured souls, who reach the third and the maturer stage of the Christian life on the one hand, or the higher development of the intellect on the other. In either case the precious gift comes alike from God; even from that Divine Spirit which divideth unto every man severally as He wills.

In the confirmed Christian, his aims after assimilation to the divine pattern of Christ his Saviour, his instantaneous reference of all hopes, and all projects, and all cares to the will of God, are now not so much the results of a conscious effort, as the intuition of a habit. His *life* has become a prayer and a thanksgiving—in him, obedience is now well-nigh spontaneous : in his glad heart, ‘love is an unerring light, and joy its own security.’

He does God's will and knows it not.

I admit that these attainments in the Christian life are rare, but then they are actual:—it was for their possession by the regenerate heart, that Christ died, that Evangelists wrote, and that Apostles preached ; for their birth, and sustenance, and growth, the Church of Christ now exists in visible form, with its holy sacraments and its ordinances of grace ; and may I not add, it is for our own nurture in these graces of the Spirit that we are here met to-day ?

True, I cannot take so lofty a flight in the case of the higher and more perfected form of the human intellect ; for intellect comes not so nigh to the throne of God as love. Nevertheless, the true philosopher has his great intuitions also. He, too, sees the things around, not with the eyes of uncultured ordinary men, but in all created things around him, he discerns order and law, fitnesses and adaptations, benignity and power. The ears of his

spirit drink in the harmonies of nature. That which in the advanced Christian partakes of the nature of inspiration, in the philosopher becomes discovery. There are, moreover, many qualities of the mind common to them both; candour, for instance, and the love of the truth; but beyond all there is — the grace of a childlike humility — for each of them knows by what slow and painful steps he has arrived, — the one, at the knowledge of God and of his own heart, — the other, at a perception of the orderly adaptations of nature and the relation of things created. Each knows that his powers have been to him, from first to last, *a gift*, and that being a gift, they carry with them responsibilities. Each feels in the depths of his spirit that he has not yet attained to his aspirations and his hopes, and he knows that immeasurably more lies before him than behind him. As a little child and as a learner, each entered upon his new life; while yet a child and a learner each knows that here he must quit it.

In thus rapidly tracing some few of the analogies between the true life spiritual and the life intellectual, it seems as if we had all along been thinking of two separate beings, but in truth we have been speaking of two phases of the life of one and the same man; for each one of us is endowed with affections and with a mind; to each of us God has given *a loving and a thinking power*; though possibly these two powers are, after all, only different sides of the

same thing. There cannot then be any true, any necessary antagonism between the love of natural knowledge and the love of God. And mark you, on whichever side that antagonism is permitted to exist, and fully up to the measure of its existence, that antagonism is a sure sign, not of the strength, but of the essential weakness, of the love. For that love of God must be weak indeed which shuns, and is afraid of, the contemplation of God's works; and that love of natural knowledge must be languid and unworthy of the name, which shuns, and is afraid of, the knowledge of the Grace of Him Who created all that can be known. In this shines forth the Divine philosophy of that Holy Book, in which it is written, "THERE IS NO FEAR IN LOVE. Perfect love casteth out fear."

But now, for one moment, and would that the moment were less brief! let us imagine the graces of the Christian faith to be superadded, by the gift of God, to the graces of natural knowledge. Then all created things assume to the eyes of that man's sanctified affections a new and a holier aspect. In the laws which bind all material things together, his understanding, with joy, recognises the wisdom of Him Who framed the law; in the varied contrivances with which all nature teems, his mind traces with a reverential love the mind of the Divine Contriver; in the beauty and the joy with which all animated things are filled his spirit reads the tenderness and the fatherly character of the Creator,



—"the very least as feeling His care, and the greatest as not exempt from His power."

And if, in his brother man, he is compelled sometimes to acknowledge traces of an unholy, unloving spirit, then the Christian philosopher thinks not only of his own infirmities, and of that Divine grace by which they are subdued, but he looks through the unholy and unloving man, at the man's true, better self; at the man as the man *may* be, and as he hopes *will* be; he sees the man *redeemed*; he sees the Christ within the man; he forgets the sinner, and his spirit is at peace.

Do you hesitate, and ask me for examples of this happy combination of intellectual strength with the Christian spirit? Do you ask for men who rejoicing in the brightest light of the knowledge of their day, rejoiced still more in the light of the knowledge of God? I will select then at once some of the noblest names in the annals of science.

In the spirit of this Law, Kepler wrote,—Kepler, the first and the greatest among the pioneers of modern science. Not a few of Kepler's labours are a prayer.

In the spirit of this Law, Pascal, endowed of God with a genius second to that of no child of man, bequeathed for an everlasting possession to the Church of Christ, "THOUGHTS" which burn.

In the spirit of this Law, Newton year by year devoted a sum of money for the purchase and distribution of copies of the Bible.



In the spirit of this Law, Leibnitz, that great and subtle geometer, with a zeal and a learning unsurpassed, devoted the prime of his life to the assuaging of the fatal animosities between the Lutherans and the Romanists of his day, saying to each of them, "Sirs, ye be brethren, be at one."

Nay, did the time and propriety permit, I could remind you of the names of a host of living Christian Philosophers, whose writings would refute the weak fond calumny that the religion of the Cross of Christ has become *among them* as a fable of the past, and obsolete.

One great name, however, still remains, and I conclude. It *was* among the names of living men when I first thought of this address to you, it *is* now the name of one living among the blessed. It is but little for me to remind you that a greater philosopher than MICHAEL FARADAY has rarely been known among us within the memory of recent times; but I am bold to add that never have we known a man who more perfectly exhibited the meekness, the peaccableness, the humility, the blamelessness, of the true child of God. I am not consciously exaggerating when I say that there went forth a virtue from that Christian man, which made those who had come from his presence feel happier, and, I may venture to say, even better men. Think not I am thus striving to laud the creature, I am rather praising the Creator by whose Divine Spirit our Faraday was made what he was.

Nevertheless this great and good man never obtruded the strength of his faith upon those whom he publicly addressed; upon principle he was habitually reticent on such topics, because he believed they were ill suited for the ordinary assemblages of men. Yet on more than one occasion when he had been discoursing on some of the magnificent prearrangements of Divine Providence, so lavishly scattered in nature, I have seen him struggle to repress the emotion which was visibly striving for utterance; and then at the last, with one single far-reaching word, he would just hint at his meaning rather than express it. On such occasions he only who had ears to hear, could hear.

With all this gentleness and tenderness of nature, Faraday nevertheless was a man of resolute decision; for his gentleness was not so much constitutional to the man, as it was the result of the discipline of a holy life.

For my own part, I know little that is more touching than one habit of this great and good man's ways. During the week, or a part of it, his thoughts, as you know, would be occupied in those deep investigations of nature which will make his name honoured wherever the annals of science are read: but when the week's work was done, and often when the day's work was done, he would quietly retire among a few plain, and for the most part *poor* Christian people, whose aim is to live after what they conceive

to be the model of the primitive Apostolic church ; and there, I am told, he would open the Bible and expound the Scriptures with a benign tenderness, and childlike simplicity, and depth of personal experience, which would have astonished, had it not so gravely impressed, his hearers. Strange to say, some of the last of these loving expositions of God's Holy Word were ministered in this very town less than four years ago.

For MICHAEL FARADAY it were incongruous to erect a statue of marble, or of bronze. His name is inscribed upon the imperishable truths which his genius brought to light. Do you, who listen, thank God who giveth such grace to man. Let us, who survive him, and who knew him—and all who knew him, knew him as a friend—let us, by imitating his gentle bearing, his truthful speech, his noiseless perseverance, his peaceful simplicity of life, endeavour to hand down the image of his character to the generation that succeeds us. In him was exhibited the truth of that Divine Philosophy of the Gospel of Christ, in which it is written :

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK : FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT  
THE EARTH.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART : FOR THEY SHALL  
SEE GOD.

## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE A.

#### ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES BY NATURAL SELECTION.

I HAVE taken the liberty of expressing my admiration of Mr Grove's philosophical acumen in grouping together the plan and operations of nature under one felicitous term. He is, I am sure, far too candid—in his address to the British Association; he has travelled over far too wide a field, and he is too conscious of the difficulties attending physical researches, not to be prepared for objections to at least some of his remarks.

He appears to have accepted the Darwinian Hypothesis as explaining the origin of that Continuity which undoubtedly exists in the natural world. I, for one, am unable to accept that Hypothesis in its length and breadth without great reserve. As an illustration of the general nature of the objections which I entertain, I will take an instance from that branch of physics with which it is my lot to be most familiar—the Optical Structure of the Human Eye. From the cornea to the retina the eye is an Optical Instrument. But what an Instrument! The computation of the curves and distances of the refracting surfaces in this instrument, and the assigning of the proper law of density for the several layers in its principal lens, would require the application of a mathematical analysis, such as I hesitate not to say was never yet possessed by a human geometer. The mechanism required for instantaneously changing the forms

and distances, and in one instance the magnitude, of its component parts, would require a handicraft such as never yet was possessed by a human mechanic. I say nothing of the chemistry required for the composition of the several constituent media. I presume Mr Darwin would admit that this description is not exaggerated. Now let us attend to the process of "natural selection," by which this marvellous organ is said to have come into being. "I can see," says Mr Darwin\*, "no very great difficulty (not more than in the case of many other structures) in believing that natural selection has converted the simple apparatus of an optic nerve, merely coated with pigment and invested by transparent membranes, into an optical instrument as perfect as is possessed by any member of the great Articulate Class."

But the true question is not '*merely*' how came this apparatus to be coated with a non-reflecting pigment, simultaneously invested with a transparent membrane, though the chances are enormously against any such *accidental*(?) concurrence of the two conditions; but there is another question behind all this, viz. how came it that the nerve with its non-reflecting pigment was so constructed as to be exactly fitted to convey the vibrations of the strange elastic luminiferous ether which *happened* to surround it? Here are *four* conditions of things each utterly *independent* of the others, viz. the nerve, then its non-reflecting coating, then a transparent medium investing it, then a most remarkable *ether* surrounding the whole, the concurrence of all four being essential to the production of vision, nevertheless we are to believe that all these adjustments and adaptations are accidentally made, retained and handed down by inheritance. If there be not evidence here of the selecting, arranging, controlling power of *mind*, will, forethought, contrivance, then I feel that I have no evidence for the existence of the individuality of my own being.

And next comes the mode after which this simple apparatus of the coated nerve, by insensible additions

\* *Origin of Species*, edit. 1, pp. 188, 189.

gradually but *accidentally* made, is said to be converted at length into the eye of man. "We ought in imagination to take a thick layer of transparent tissue with a nerve sensitive to light beneath, and then suppose every part of this layer to be continually changing slowly in density, so as to separate into layers of different densities and thicknesses, placed at different distances from each other, and with the surfaces of each layer slowly changing in form. Further, we must suppose that there is a power always intently watching each slightly *accidental alteration* in the transparent layers, and carefully selecting each alteration which, under varied circumstances, may, in any way, or in any degree, tend to produce a distincter image. We must suppose each new state of the instrument to be multiplied by the million; and each to be preserved till a better be produced, and then the old ones to be destroyed. Let this process go on for millions on millions of years. . . ." Now we must here ask, What is this "power always intently watching each slightly accidental alteration"? A few lines further down in Mr Darwin's page we read: "NATURAL SELECTION will pick out with unerring skill each improvement." But what is this "Natural Selection"? We must here take Mr Darwin's own definition: "This preservation of favourable variations, and the rejection of injurious variations, I call Natural Selection\*."

Now to me there appear three objections, which indispose me to accept the above description of the processes by which the human eye could have been formed, and I will state them as succinctly as I can. First, consistently with such knowledge of optical combinations as I happen to possess, I cannot understand how, by any series of *accidental* variations, so complicated a structure as an eye could possibly have been successively *improved*. The chances of any accidental variation in such an instrument being an *improvement* are small indeed. Suppose, for instance, one of the surfaces of the crystalline lens of the eye of a creature, possessing

\* *Origin of Species*, p. 81.



a crystalline and cornea, to be accidentally altered, then I say, that unless the form of the other surface is simultaneously altered, *in one only way* out of millions of possible ways, the eye would not be optically *improved*. An alteration also in the two surfaces of the crystalline lens, whether accidental or otherwise, would involve a definite alteration in the form of the cornea, or in the distance of its surface from the centre of the crystalline lens, in order that the eye may be optically better. All these alterations must be simultaneous and definite in amount, and these definite amounts must coexist in obedience to an extremely complicated law. To my apprehension then, that so complex an instrument as an eye should undergo a succession of millions of *improvements*, by means of a succession of millions of *accidental* alterations, is not less improbable, than if all the letters in the "Origin of Species" were placed in a box, and on being shaken and poured out millions on millions of times, they should at last come out together in the order in which they occur in that fascinating and, in general, highly philosophical work.

But my objections do not stop here. The improvement of an organ must be an improvement relative to the new circumstances by which the organ is surrounded. Suppose, then, that an eye is altered for the better in relation to one set of circumstances under which it is placed. By-and-bye there arise a second set of circumstances, and the eye is again, by Natural Selection, altered and improved relatively to the second set of circumstances. What is there to make the second set of circumstances such that the second improvement (relative to them) shall be an improvement or progress *in the direction of* the ultimate goal of the human eye? Why should not the second improvement be a retrogression *away from* the ultimate organ now possessed by man, and necessary to his well-being? But all this suiting of the succession of circumstances is to go on, not once or twice, but millions on millions of times. If this be so, then not only must there be a BIAS in the order of the

succession of the circumstances, or, at all events, in the vast outnumbering of the unfavourable circumstances by the favourable, but so strong a bias, as to remove the whole process from the accidental to the *intentional*. The *bias*\* implies the existence of a Law, a Mind, a Will. The process becomes one not of Natural Selection, but of *Selection by an Intelligent Will*.

In considering the state of things just described, we must also take into the account, that the successive variations of the eye are said to be *accidental*. What, then, but a *constantly exerted* Intelligent Will, could cause the occurrence of new surrounding circumstances of such a character as to meet these accidental variations, and concur ultimately to produce a certain definite result, that is to say, an instrument possessing the necessary and truly wonderful contrivances of the Human Eye? But is such a process, the process, that is, of selecting new circumstances adapted to previous *accidental* variations, to be called Providence, or Miracle, or the Inversion of Providence?

It is very satisfactory to me to find that since the first publication of these notes, eighteen months ago, the Duke of Argyle in his invaluable and well timed treatise on the *Reign of Law*†, by approaching this subject from a different and more general point of view, has arrived at conclusions similar to those enunciated here. This philosophical observer writes as follows:—

“If, then, it be true that new species are created out of small variations in the form of old species, and this by way of natural generation, there must be some bond of connexion which determines those variations in a definite direction, and keeps up the external correlations *pari passu* with the internal correlations. Natural Selection can have no part in this. Natural Selection seizes on these external correlations when they have come to be. But

\* On this subject of bias, see a highly philosophical review of ‘*Quetelet On Probabilities*,’ in Sir John Herschel’s *Essays*.

† *Reign of Law*, p. 273, ed. 3.

Natural Selection cannot enter the secret chambers of the womb, and there shape the new form in harmony with modified conditions of external life. How, then, are these external correlations provided for beforehand? There can be but one reply. It is by utility, not acting as a physical cause upon organs already in existence but acting through motive as a mental purpose in contriving organs before they have begun to be. And where obvious utility does result, the only connecting bond which can be conceived as capable of maintaining the internal correlations in harmony with the external correlations, is the bond of creative will, giving to organic forces a foreseen direction. It is, in short, precisely the same bond which in all mechanism produces harmony of structure with intended function."

On reading Mr Darwin's enchanting volume, we seem to be, as it were, in the hands of a great magician, who leads us up and down the Elysian fields, pointing out to us on this side and on that new aspects of things which, though true, were beyond the reach of our expectations; nevertheless, when as we hope, we are nearing the hill-top and getting a sight of the primordial genesis of organised beings, the chariot on which he has mounted us rolls down the hill like the stone of Sisypheus.

"With hands and feet struggling, he shoved the stone  
Up a hill-top ; but the steep well-nigh  
Vanquished, by some great force repulsed, the mass  
Rushed again obstinate down to the plain.

Tall trees, fruit laden, with inflected heads  
Stooped to us ; pears, pomegranates, apples bright,  
The luscious figs, and unctuous olive smooth,  
Which, when with sudden grasp we would have seized,  
Winds whirled them high into the dusky clouds."

*Odyssey*, Book xi.

Thus baffled, nothing that I can see remains but that we take our refuge in the magnificent old words,—

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH. HE SPAKE THE WORD AND THEY WERE MADE; HE HATH GIVEN THEM A LAW WHICH SHALL NOT BE BROKEN.

## NOTE B.

## ON PRAYER.

“ In it did he live,  
And by it did he live; it was his life.  
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power  
That made him; it was blessedness and love!”

WORDSWORTH.

Some months have now elapsed since Professor Tyndall, in one of the public journals, put a question regarding prayer, which at the time excited much attention and some animadversion. In reference to the propriety of prayer to God for the removal of epidemic and other diseases, Dr Tyndall asked whether “Prayer had proved itself a match for vaccination?” Various answers were given to this question, and to other questions which this one essentially involves, I will now endeavour to give my own reply.

In one of those exquisite Dialogues which have come down to us from the wisest of the ancients for an everlasting possession, Socrates is represented as meeting a great statesman in the streets of Athens, on his way to the temple of some god to pray. The nature of his errand was manifest from the chaplet which he carried in his hand, while the gravity with which he kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, indicated that the object of the vow he was about to offer was, in the statesman’s thought, one of more than ordinary importance. Whether it was that Socrates well knew the restless ambition of Alcibiades (for that was the statesman’s name), and therefore suspected that his friend and disciple, having some unscrupulous project on foot, was now on his way to conciliate the good-will of the god for its accomplishment; or whether the mere sight of the sacrificial chaplet alone, suggested the thought; we are told that the sage immediately stopped the statesman, and, as his wont ever was, began to ply him with a string of questions, the drift of the

questions now being directed to the proper objects and the propriety of prayer. "Do you think," said he, "that the gods sometimes grant and sometimes refuse our prayers? Do you see that there are very many foolish men,—some of them foolish even to madness,—and that such men necessarily offer to the gods very foolish prayers? Do you think there is no danger, that while you ask for what you believe will be for your good, you may inadvertently be seeking for what, if granted, would be your ruin? And then he goes on to ask him what sort of knowledge a man should properly possess before it was safe for him to pray to the gods. Should it not be the knowledge of what is *the best*? And are they many, or are they few, who possess this knowledge? And if they have not this knowledge, how do they know what they ought to pray for?" Hereupon Alcibiades confesses himself perplexed, and says, "he inclines to leave the choice of blessings to the gods." Socrates then digresses to questions regarding that state of the suppliant's mind which is most agreeable to the god; and after recounting an anecdote or two, of how a certain costly and magnificent national ritual had been disregarded by the gods, while they had lent a propitious ear to a very simple prayer, he quotes a few lines from Homer, to the effect that "the gods care not for our gifts, but they do regard the state of our souls."

The Sage then proceeds to tell the statesman that there was indeed one prayer which seemed to him both wise and safe; he had learned it, he says, from an old poet, who had recommended it to his friends who were praying unwisely, and it was to the following effect:—"Sovereign Jove, what is good for us, grant, though we ask it not; but from what is dangerous, though we ask for it, O King, deliver us\*!" Even to us in this nineteenth century, these are burning words, reminding us of words familiar and more burning still, and one might have supposed they would have satisfied Alcibiades.

\* Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνεύκτοις  
Ἄρμυι δίδου, τὰ δὲ δεινὰ, καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπολέξον.

PLATO, *Alcib.* II. p. 143.



He does indeed go so far as to admit that the prayer was both wise and safe, but Alcibiades was an Athenian, and "the Greeks seek after wisdom." To them, all ignorance was, as it still is to some modern philosophers, a positive evil; and this prayer, safe as it was, seemed little better than an appeal to, or it might be even the offspring of, ignorance. Thereupon ensues a series of questions as to human ignorance, but these I omit as not being essential to our present argument; and I now come to a thought which to some of my readers will appear not alone unexpected, but even startling, as proceeding from a heathen philosopher more than two thousand years ago.

"Alcibiades, you are perplexed and even disappointed, but you must wait," said Socrates; "you must wait till there comes some one who shall be instructed how to remove this ignorance." "And when will this time come?" asks the statesman; "and who shall be my teacher?" "It is even *one who cares for you* \*," replies the sage; "as Homer says that Minerva removed the mist from the eyes of Diomedes,

'That he might well discern if the shape were a god or a mortal;'

so must this teacher remove the mist which now envelopes your mind, that you may discern what is good and what is evil, which at present, methinks, you have no power to see." "Well, then," said Alcibiades, "if only he makes me better, let him remove the mist, or whatever else it may be, and whosoever this man may be." "And he will do it," rejoins Socrates; "for it is marvellous how great is the regard he bears you." "It seems, then," concludes Alcibiades, "that till this teacher comes, I had better defer my prayer."

Such, then, was the knowledge, such were the hopes, and such was the indecision of the best-informed among the ancients, on the subject of prayer. So deep, so irrepressible, so unsatisfied, appears to have been the longing of the great thinkers of the heathen world for the advent of some teacher who should throw a light upon the relations in which men

\* See the Preface; and the quotation before this Sermon.



stand to the world unseen, that the thought of it, we are told, recurred to the martyr sage when there remained but an hour or two before the fatal cup was to set the seal to the sincerity of his life. But it was not now, as before, the need and the hope of a teacher who should inform him how to demean himself before the God at the time of his prayer, or even what it was safe for him to pray for, but it was now rather the utterance of the longing for a teacher who should deliver his friends,—not himself observe, but his friends,—*from the fear of death*. It even might be that Socrates suspected the two teachers would be one and the same. “It is not ourselves,” said his friend Cebes in the prison, “that are frightened, it is rather a child within us that is terrified; but, alas! now that you are about to leave us, where shall we find one who is master of a spell sufficient to remove this fear\*?” “Greece is a wide place,” replies the calm, heroic old man, “and there are many foreign nations also, and in search of this teacher we must explore many regions, and spare neither trouble nor money in the search; and you must search also amongst yourselves for this gift, for, perhaps, you will not easily find any one who possesses this power more than you do.” And these are among the last words of the wisest of men, spoken while they who had the appointed office were even now grinding the hemlock that was to consign him to his doom.

It is here that, with a sort of passionate impatience, our thoughts glance across the breadth of but a narrow sea, from Athens and from the utterance of these dim hopes, to where Malachi, the last of a long line of Hebrew prophets, at that very time was speaking, as his brethren for a thousand years had spoken before him, of the advent of such a teacher, yet more than a teacher, and that with no stammering lips, but as if he were nigh at the very door. “You must search for him, you must spend your labour and your money in the search,” said the dying sage, and he said it possibly from the natural convictions of his polished intellect. “Behold! He shall

\* Plato, *Phædo*, § 60, 61.

come, the messenger whom ye seek shall come! the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings!" These were the last words of the last of the expiring race of the Hebrew Seers; and he spoke from the inspired emotions of his heart. For four hundred years there was no more such Sage, nor for four hundred years was the voice heard of any such Prophet.

To Doctor Tyndall's question, and what it involves, the words quoted above give nearly all the answer which Natural Religion can supply. It may, however, be added that the scheme of CONTINUITY observable in nature cannot but force upon our minds the contemplation of the existence of created intelligences superior to ourselves, and active with a diviner energy, in some other parts of the universe, or even close to our paths or nigh to our beds, and so onwards and onwards, until we reach the One Infinitely Intelligent and Beneficent Mind, the Lord and Creator of them all.

And here, again, the scheme of CORRELATION steps in, and inasmuch as it has been shown to apply as closely to the laws of our moral nature as to the laws of our physical being, it affords to us something more than the dawn of a hope that inasmuch as there is implanted within our universal nature a principle or affection for religion, and a yearning for intercourse with some spiritual essences beyond ourselves, so there must be, in correlation to this affection and this yearning, some proper object for that affection to adore, and some spirits to reciprocate the sympathies of that yearning. It is a part of the constitution of Human Nature, that appetites, passions, and affections have their several proper and distinctive objects: what then is the object correlative to this universal yearning?

Now in this darkness or this light of nature, call it which you please, the Christian points to that Teacher for the advent of whom the ancient sages longed. To that Divine Teacher's Word the Christian must listen, and that example which He set, the Christian must strive to follow. It is needless to say this Divine Man was pre-eminently a man of

prayer; and if you ask how and for what He prayed, and what He declared was the Law of Prayer in the new kingdom which He said He came to establish, it will all be found in the records of His life, and some small portion of it has been indicated in the Sermon which precedes this note. The remark, however, may here be added, for it bears especially on the question before us: there once came an hour when the approach of physical suffering appalled even that Man of Strength, and His prayer then was, that God His Father, if possible, would *remove the cup*, but if not, "THY WILL BE DONE." I could say more than this, if in reverence and propriety I dared, for I could refer to those strong, sad, mysterious cryings upon the Cross when the Teacher whom the Sages longed for, the Saviour of the World, was bruised for our iniquities, and was bearing the chastisement of our sins; but the theme is too sacred, and our natural emotions are neither to be tempted nor trusted here.

When, then, Dr Tyndall asks whether it is right to pray for the aversion of cholera, or of smallpox, or of physical suffering of any sort, or whether vaccination proved a match for prayer, I have given the answer; partly here, and partly in the Sermon. Of this much at least we are quite sure, that One wiser than the questioner, in the hour of his own agony, "offered up prayers with strong cryings and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

But how know we that the Teacher has surely come, and that His religion comes from God? For the learned we appeal to the testimony of history; for the learned and unlearned alike there is this better evidence—TRY IT\*.

If it be still further urged that the scheme of nature is carried on by fixed unalterable laws, and that the storm whose cradle is in the Atlantic must spend its fury on the very spot where the laws of heat and of vapour bid it; if it be said that the path of the cholera, the cattle plague, the

\* This is the practical argument somewhere proposed by Coleridge, and to this I have alluded in one of the Lectures in this volume.

smallpox, is as surely prepared beforehand and as inevitably as is the path of the electric flash—be it so;—but whence know we that intervention is impossible? . I see at this moment a bud on one of the trees which skirt the boundary of my neighbour's land. I know that when that bud has become a branch next year it is certain from the laws of nature on what precise spots and at what precise moments the several leaves of that branch will fall. But not so; my neighbour next year may erect his haystack close by that tree, and then all is changed. *So there comes in the contingency of a will.*

I venture to give this homely illustration of the very trifling amount of the intervention which, in many cases, may be all that is necessary to prevent very serious consequences, because it is a common thing to be told that the Laws of Nature cannot be violated at the light bidding of a human being. Even on natural grounds, on the ground, that is, of the continuity of being, the existence of some such beings as angels is at least conceivable; and, that there may be reasons and occasions for the interference of such beings, not in opposition to but even in accordance with, the Laws of Nature, is also equally conceivable. I need hardly say that what Nature herein suggests, the Scriptures confirm.

But is not much of the life of man spent in contriving interventions against those consequences which would follow if the laws of nature took their own course independent of the direction of his will? By the force of the genius which the Creator has given him, does he not harness the winds and guide the lightning, and make fire, and air, and earth, and water, do the bidding of his intelligent desires? Does not the law of Continuity, then, lead us to expect that the Will of the Creator must be at least as free to intervene as is the will of the creature?

But what then are the proper limitations to prayer? In the body of the Sermon I have already said that the Christian may, and, in his ignorance, or his weakness, or his agony, often does, offer prayers for that which it may be im-

possible to grant, or if granted, would be injurious. Nevertheless, even such a prayer, if offered in a filial spirit, may, in its true essence, be accorded ; for it not unfrequently happens that, whatever may be the words or the *form* of the prayer, the true meaning of the suppliant, is the need that he feels for peace of mind, or strength, or fortitude, and these heavenly gifts are among the chief objects of all acceptable prayer. Viewed in this light, a prayer which may be acceptable to God, as coming from one of His children, may be wholly unacceptable if it proceeded from another whose circumstances are different. The form or substance of the prayer must bear a suitable relation to the knowledge of the suppliant. In any case, whether that of the philosopher or of the unlettered man, whether the prayer be in public or in private, whether it be the prayer of a nation or of an individual, there can be no doubt that the spirit, and perhaps even the words of the prayer, ought to be conformable to the supplication of the Divine Saviour, and be presented before the Throne of Grace with the qualification : "FATHER, IF IT BE POSSIBLE ; NEVERTHELESS, NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS THOU WILT."

This is scarcely the place to enter, at any length, on the *subjective* influences of prayer : it may be that they are its chief, though by no means its sole intention. It may be well to remember that Augustine said he prayed in order to stir up a spirit of devotion.

I shall therefore conclude this long note by referring to the sentiments entertained on the subject which has so long detained us, by one of the most acute and independent minds that ever existed. It is said of the great philosopher Coleridge, that in one of his youthful poems, speaking of God, he writes,

" ——— Of whose all-seeing eye  
Aught to demand were impotence of mind !"

But in his maturer years he told one of his friends that he reverted to this sentiment with strong compunction. He considered that the act of praying was the very highest



energy of which the human heart was capable, praying, that is, with the total concentration of the faculties; and the great mass of worldly men and of learned men he pronounced absolutely incapable of prayer. Two years before his death he said, "Believe me, to pray with all your heart and strength, with the reason and the will, to believe vividly that God will listen to your voice through Christ, and verily do the thing He pleaseth thereupon,—this is the last, the greatest achievement of the Christian warfare upon earth. TEACH us to pray, O Lord." And then he burst into a flood of tears.

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## NOTE C.

## THE PHILOSOPHER FOLLOWED—AFTER MANY DAYS.

Mr Grove, in page 35 of his Address, says:—"The fair question is, Does the newly-proposed view remove more difficulties, require fewer assumptions, and present more consistency with observed facts than that which it seeks to supersede? If so, the philosopher will adopt it, and the world will follow the philosopher—after many days."

This thought, which it is presumed will be accepted by all who are competent to form an opinion, provided a sufficiently comprehensive meaning is attached to the word Philosopher so as not to exclude the Theologian, was so beautifully expressed by Plato in one of his exquisite allegories, some two thousand years ago, that for the sake of the general reader, I will here reproduce it. "Let us figure to ourselves a number of persons chained from their birth in a subterranean cavern, with their backs to the entrance of the cavern, and a fire burning behind them, between which and the prisoners runs a roadway, flanked by a wall high enough to conceal the persons who pass along the road, while it allows the shadows of things which they carry on their heads to be thrown by the fire on the wall of the cavern facing the prisoners, to whom



these shadows, and the voices of the carriers, will appear the only realities. Now, suppose that one of them has been unbound and taken up to the light of day, and gradually habituated to the objects around him, till he has learned properly to appreciate them. Such a man is to the prisoners what the rightly-educated philosopher is to the mass of half-educated men. If he returns to the cavern and resumes his old seat and occupations, he will, at first, be the laughing-stock of the place, just as the philosopher is the laughing-stock of the multitude. But once re-habituated to the darkness of the cavern, his knowledge of the objects which throw the shadows, will enable him to surpass the prisoners on their own ground. . . \*."

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NOTE D.

ARE CHRISTIAN ETHICS AN ADVANCE ON ANCIENT ETHICS?

The foregoing free version of a part of the Platonic dialogue, brings me to the last remark, which I shall venture to make on the President's Address. In page 37 he says:—"In Ethics we have scarcely, if at all, advanced beyond the highest intellects of Greece or Italy . . ." Certainly no clearer or truer view could be given of the tendency of the advancement of learning than the one put into the mouth of Socrates as quoted above. But is it *true* that no advance has been made in ethics since the days of Plato? These notes extend to so great a length that I shall confine myself to the following few and intentionally very brief remarks, or rather hints:—

I. Deuteronomy was written a thousand years before the birth of Socrates; and a long line of inspired Hebrew poets had completed their prophecies before Aristotle even commenced his writings. Nevertheless I think the old Hebrew ethics will bear something more than a very favour-

\* Plato, *Republic*, Book VII.

able comparison with any system of moral philosophy that was ever debated within sight of the Acropolis, up to the day when Paul, at Athens, read the inscription "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD."

II. Are not the following ethical principles greatly in advance of the teachings of the highest intellects of Greece?

Render to no man evil for evil\*.

Love your enemies.

Honour *all* men.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.

Husbands, love your wives, even as *Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.*

Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. And, until the Man of sorrows set the example, who had ever gone about "*doing good*"?

In contrast with these Christian maxims, may be placed the fact, that Plato extols the Athenians for their hatred of foreigners†; Aristotle calls abstinence from the retaliation of evil, the mark of a slavish spirit‡; and it is well known how the disciple and biographer of Socrates reckons the infliction of injuries upon an enemy, among the most manly of the virtues§.

In what I have so far said, I have purposely confined myself to the *Greek* writer on Ethics. A very accomplished author||, while he agrees in the main with the above estimate of Plato and Aristotle, expresses the opinion that the case may be somewhat different with the *Roman* moralist *Seneca*. Mr Cope says that certain expressions such as 'Amicis jucundus, inimicis mitis et facilis.' 'Opem ferre

\* Compare this with Aristotle, *Ethics*, Book v. Chap. v., where he says: "for a man not to retaliate evil, appears to be slavishness of mind." The play upon the word Gratitude in the next clause, proves that the great ethical philosopher includes *private* retaliation, as well as public justice.

† Menexenus, § 17. But see Whewell. ‡ *Ethics*, Chap. v. Book v.

§ Xenophon, *Anabasis*.

|| A *Review of Aristotle's Ethics*, (Deighton, Bell, and Co., Cambridge), pp. 55, 56, by the Rev. E. M. Cope, Senior Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College.

etiam inimicis.' 'Vincit malos pertinax bonitas.' And especially 'Non est quod irascaris; ignosce illis, omnes insaniunt.' "come so near to the Christian precepts, that in this case, at least, Christianity has nothing that can be called absolutely original, and has done little more than extend and enlarge moral conceptions, which had by one at least been previously entertained." Mr Cope adds that the expression, 'Sed non est quod irascaris, ignosce illis, omnes insaniunt' has been compared by M. Fleury with 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do' (!!). If the two expressions are in reality comparable, then I confess I am incapable of appreciating moral differences.

The reader will probably be as much amazed as I am if he will translate for himself the entire passage from Seneca, of which the quotation above forms a part: I will not venture on the English expression of certain of the clauses which in the original are painful: "Catoni populus Romanus præturam negavit, consulatum pernegavit. Ingrati publice sumus. se quisque interroget: nemo non aliquem queritur ingratum. atqui non potest fieri, ut omnes querantur, nisi querendum est de omnibus: omnes ergo ingrati sunt: [*ingrati*] tantum? et cupidi omnes et maligni omnes et timidi omnes, illi in primis qui videntur audaces. adice, et ambitiosi omnes sunt et inpii omnes. *Sed non est quod irascaris. ignosce illis: omnes insaniunt.* Nolo te ad incerta revocare, ut dicam: vide quam ingrata sit juvenus: quis non patri suo supremum diem, ut innocens sit, optat? ut moderatus sit, exspectat? ut pius, cogitat? Quotus quisque uxoris optimæ mortem timet, ut non et computet?" Sen. *de Beneficiis*, Lib. v. c. 17. Does this approach the Divine Morality of the Gospel? Is this the conception of Christian ethics? I, for one, could as easily acquiesce in the correctness of Mr Buckle's conception of the Pauline Epistles, when he writes, "that some of the most beautiful passages in the Apostolic writings are quotations from Pagan authors, is well known (?!!) to every scholar." !!

But in forming an estimate of the superiority of Chris-

tian over Ancient Ethics, there are two circumstances to be borne in mind over and above the ethical principles themselves. First, it is a great peculiarity of Christianity, that it presents the model of a Life for the Christian's imitation. Secondly, it undertakes to provide a transforming power, whereby its precepts may be spontaneously obeyed. For in proportion to the degree in which the Christian realizes his calling, he surrenders his will and his affections to a living Christ, ever present to his vision by the eye of faith; and hence not only are the unlovely passions and emotions of his natural heart subdued by the expulsive power of a new affection, but by virtue of the bond which unites himself to Christ, he becomes united to his fellow-Christians by the strongest of ties. Nay, this feeling, thus divinely inspired, is more comprehensive still; for, just as the well-instructed man sees in flowers, and shrubs, and trees, not the sickly, stunted vegetation, which may chance to be before him, but rather the luxuriance natural to them in a happier climate and a more congenial soil, so the Christian, by virtue of his faith, sees in every man, the man redeemed, he sees the Christ within the man; to him every man becomes a brother, and by an inborn principle, he becomes a law to himself, spontaneously rendering to no man evil for evil, loving his enemies, and honouring all men. Such are Christian ethics *in their truth and purity*. When the great Athenian moralist was forming his ideal state, he proposed, for all the ordinances and sanctions of religion, to refer to the Oracle at the Omphalos of the world\*; to the Christian, that Omphalos is the CROSS OF CHRIST.

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NOTE E.

ON THE WORDS TRANSLATED 'FAITH' AND 'TRUST' IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In the Nottingham Sermon I have insisted on the identity of idea conveyed by the word *Trust*, in the Old

\* *Republic*, Book IV.

Testament, with that conveyed by the word Faith, in the New Testament. There is, however, a certain shade of difference between them well worth the reader's observation; and this difference, together with the manner in which the Hebrew words associated with *trust*, are translated in the Septuagint, will furnish the matter of this note.

The English word *Faith* occurs twice only in the Old Testament, and in neither instance has it the distinctive meaning of the New Testament faith. It occurs first in Deut. xxxii. 20, 'Children in whom is no faith;' *i.e.* who are not to be relied on. It occurs secondly in the well-known passage, Hab. ii. 4, 'The just shall live by his faith.' Although this passage is quoted twice by St Paul, and again once in the Epistle to the Hebrews; nevertheless, the word *faith* in the original language undoubtedly means *steadfastness*: the thought, in fact, very closely resembles that in Matt. x. 22, 'He that endureth to the end, shall be saved.' It is presumable that the Apostle Paul quotes the passage from the Old Testament partly on account of the general suitability of the words, and partly because the original thought of *steadfastness* (or enduring to the end), implies an antecedent *trust* in Jehovah.

The Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה thus translated above, Deut. xxxii. 20, and Hab. ii. 4, by the word *faith*, occurs forty-nine times in the Old Testament. Etymologically, its meaning is *steadfastness*, something firm and to be relied on; in the English version it is most frequently rendered by *faithfulness*; it is five times applied to *an office* just as we speak of *a trust*. This word is also applied to the hands of Moses when they were supported by Aaron and Hur; his hands were 'hands of steadiness.'

On the whole then, it may be said, that out of the forty-nine times in which the Hebrew word occurs, it on no one occasion signifies *reliance upon*, or *trust in* a person. In the single passage, Hab. ii. 4, it may contain or imply the idea of an antecedent trustfulness of spirit.

Nevertheless, this אֱמוּנָה is the Hebrew word rendered



in the Septuagint about twenty times by the Greek πίστις (faith), and I cannot find any other Hebrew word thus rendered by the Greek translators.

The question then arises, are there no words in the Old Testament which really signify *trust*, or *confidence*, in the sense of reliance on a person, or on a thing? The reply may be, without great exaggeration, the Old Testament is *full* of such terms, and yet these words are on no occasion translated by πίστις. The object of this note is to call attention to the fact, and if possible, to explain it.

In Hebrew there is a verb, and its correlative substantive, which occur above one hundred and fifty times in the Old Testament in the *definite* meaning of the English words *trust*, *confidence*, *reliance*. The verb is בָּטַח, *to trust in, to confide in*; the substantive is מִבְטָח, *trust, confidence*. Their meaning is fixed and definite, and yet these words are not rendered in the Septuagint by πίστις, but very commonly by ἐλπίς (*hope*). There is also another word הָסַח, signifying properly to hasten, and used in the sense of *to flee for refuge*, ex. gr. under the wings of God, and hence *to trust in*; it is rendered in the English Version thirty-four times by '*trust*:' yet not once in the Septuagint by πίστις, but frequently by ἐλπίς. Can we fairly account for this avoidance of the word πίστις, and this use of the word ἐλπίς by the Greek translators? I think we can.

So long as the Jewish Theocracy continued, there was a constant sense of the *presence* of the Divine King in the midst of His people. It is to this fact that in page 90, I have referred the absence of any frequent mention of a future life by the saints of old; for I presume (pace Bp. Warburton) that under their peculiar circumstances, the thought of a future life was rather an unquestioned and settled principle, than an article of religious *belief*, or an object of *hope*. When, however, the long line of the Prophets ceased in Malachi, and thus that last sensible evidence of the presence of the Divine King among His people was removed, then it became necessary to express articles of Jewish faith



in *words*, and the fact of a future life became a dogma or a doctrine. I need hardly say that when that belief was of necessity expressed verbally as a dogma, then by an unhappy principle in our nature, up rose Sadducees and denied it.

Just on the same general principle, the feeling of a Jew, which, during the Theocracy, had been one of simple trust in a present Jehovah, or a fleeing to him for shelter; after Malachi, became associated in his mind, first with *belief* in an unseen God, and then *followed* by *reliance* on His aid. During the Theocracy the pious Jew never stopped to ask himself whether he *believed* in God, he *trusted* Him at once. After Malachi, that which had been a sure and present confidence, soon degenerated into a *hope*.

And herein I think we have a sufficient explanation how it came about that the Septuagint translators selected words so distinctly associated with *belief* as אֱמוּנָה and אֱמִינָן for translation by πίστις; while they rendered other words distinctly associated with simple *trust*, viz. בָּטַח, מִבְּטָח and חֶסֶד, by such comparatively inadequate words as ἐλπίζω and ἐλπίς. An Alexandrine Jew would *hope* where David would *trust*. I suspect that the same principle admits of a more general application.

There is an admirable note on a portion of this subject by Professor Lightfoot in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 153, Ed. II. The reader is strongly advised to consult it: he will, however, perceive that I have ventured to differ somewhat from the learned Professor in not admitting any 'hovering' in the word אֱמוּנָה. There is also an excellent paper by the Rev. T. T. Perowne, in the *Christian Advocate*, for April, 1867, which is worth consulting.

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